An Interview with Cody Pfanstiehl

15 December 1999; 4 January 2000; 20 September 2000

Silver Spring, Maryland

Interviewer: Zachary M. Schrag

Transcribed by Doug Wilson and edited by Mr. Schrag

Session 1

15 December 1999

Schrag: Zachary Schrag is interviewing Mr. Cody Pfanstiehl. It is December 15th, 1999, a little less --

Pfanstiehl: The millennium.

Schrag: A little past two o'clock. We are at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland. I was going to explain my interview strategy here. As I see it, you've had theoretically one job through a period of decades. You started in 1961, and when did you leave WMATA?

Pfanstiehl: 1982, I guess it was. It was twenty-one years from '61. That would be '82.

Schrag: And your job was in community services, but what you were sowing and whom you were sowing it to always changed.

Pfanstiehl: I didn't want to be called "Public Information." That was the key word in those days and still is. But I didn't like the idea that some information was public and some was private, because we were a public agency. So I

termed myself, and my office eventually when I got an office, Community Relations, which covered the all fronts, because I would go out and talk to the Kiwanis Club and then I would do an interview on television. So it was relating to the community in the truest sense.

Schrag: So how did you first get involved with the NCTA? How did you get your job?

Pfanstiehl: When the NCTA was put together by the White House, [Darwin] Stolzenbach looked for a person who had had several backgrounds. One would be in media. Well, I had worked for WTOP Radio. Even before that I had been in radio down in South Carolina where I met my first wife. I had been the first public relations/marketing/community relations person for the United Fund. The United Fund was the precursor to an organization which tried to unite the District and the Maryland suburbs and the Virginia suburbs, because back in the 60s and the 50s and the 40s and before that, the Potomac River was a hundred miles wide. It was a huge moat and things were hardly -- people were hardly talking to each other on each side.

However, I was the first person to be the community relations person for a newfangled way of raising money across the region. We called it then the United Givers Fund but later it turned into just the United Fund. That was the first organization -- really the first organization except something like maybe the Boy Scouts or something -- to unite, have working in tandem, the Virginians and the Marylanders and the Districters. So I had the regional experience. And they wanted somebody who had been in media, and I had been with WTOP when television was first put in, and I had been with newspapers really all my life. I was editor of the grammar school paper and that sort of thing. So I was fairly well versed and comfortable with the newspaper world. I had media, I had regional experience, and that made up what they wanted for this.

Schrag: The United Fund was a charitable organization?

Pfanstiehl: The United Fund was a fund-raising organization. Go back to 1960. In major cities and most every place, when you wanted to raise

money for the Red Cross and the local social settlement house and whatnot, the social workers got out on the street and held out their tin cups, so to speak, or made their mailings. I had been very much engaged in social work in Chicago. When it got to be 1960 and ’61, in cities -- Detroit was the first one -- society began thinking that it’s silly to have a social worker leave the playground where she’s supervising the kids and go raise money, for God’s sake. So they began organizing in Detroit, St. Louis, and other cities, and eventually in Washington, having those who gave the money make their own organization and raise the money, put it in a big pot, and distribute it. That was what came to Washington, and that was what the United Fund was. They chose me to be the promotion guy for that.

Now, what that did was to make the person in Alexandria and the person in Montgomery County aware of each other. We took people from Alexandria literally in a bus, not quite kicking and screaming, and ran them across the river and ran them up to Rockville, [with sarcasm] that

little village way up there in Maryland, and showed them that there were Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in Rockville and they did the same thing that the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts did back in Alexandria, for heavens sakes. They were amazed. That began to get a psychology, a mindset, of the people in the region that maybe we would be all happier if we did get together across that hundred-mile-wide Potomac River and do something together. That, in a sense, was a spiritual, social precursor of Metro, because, of course, Metro was also getting the region together. In the case of Metro, it was two states and the thirteen counties and so on, but the situation was the same where you have a unity of thought and action by disparate political jurisdictions.

Schrag: Now, Stolzenbach -- he was from Maryland.

Pfanstiehl: Stolzenbach was a civic activist in Montgomery County, fairly well known for his anti-roads philosophy. He heard about me, and I was recommended by -- and I'll think of his name for a minute -- a guy who was a historian in

Montgomery County who wrote a history of the Potomac River.

Schrag: Frederick Gutheim?

Pfanstiehl: Yes. Fritz Gutheim.

Schrag: Okay. Because he was a big regionalist, as I understand it.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, he was. So Fritz Gutheim told Darwin there was this guy named Pfanstiehl. At the time I was working for the [Washington] Evening Star as their first community relations person in a hundred and fifty years. That was an interesting experience. At any rate, I was recommended because of those reasons that I told you. I met Stolzenbach on a sort of a dark evening down on a street. I forget what street it was, but we had agreed to meet. This long, tall, gaunt figure in a flapping black raincoat came toward me [and said], “Hi, I’m Darwin Stolzenbach.” [Laughter]. Thus it began.

At the time, the NCTA was brand new. As you know, it was an independent government agency. On the organization charts of the United States you’ve got the president up here in a little box,

and then you've got all of these stuff below him. But [there is] a little dotted line off of the president and the White House, and there was NCTA. Now, Darwin was the chosen administrator of that little NCTA, and I was hired by Darwin. So Darwin used to tell me, "You're only one heartbeat away from the president." [Laughter].

Schrag: To back up to Gutheim, was he involved with the United Fund or how did he connect with him?

Pfanstiehl: He was the philosophical, political arranger for a lot of the organization of the NCTA. It was said, however, that the NCTA was really born in an automobile by commuters from Rockville, three of whom worked for the Department of the Budget. They were being awakened by society, as many cities were, that you've got to do something about transportation or the city is a goner. These three guys -- and their names are somewhere; I don't know who they were -- began at the Bureau of the Budget to say, "Let's put together a little agency that can do something about this." So you could say that the idea of a

regional approach to transportation was born in the automobile on the way from Rockville to work.

Schrag: Do you know when that would have been? Was that during [Dwight D.] Eisenhower?

Pfanstiehl: It would have been in the very late 50s, because ’61 -- I believe that was not the date when -- I was hired in ’61. Earlier that year, I think -- who was it? -- [Lyndon B.] Johnson, wasn’t it, who organized NCTA?

Schrag: Actually, the NCTA was organized under Eisenhower, but it didn’t do anything under Eisenhower. There was this sort of placeholder agency for a few months that actually did hire some people who stayed, including Robert Keith and Tom Deen.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes.

Schrag: So they predated Stolzenbach, but I don’t think they did anything.

Pfanstiehl: Okay. Then back up to when that got started, and that would be the date of these guys. Somewhere their names will turn up -- the Budget Bureau.

Schrag: So if I understand it, Gutheim knew you as a regionalist and thought this is the kind of person we need.

Pfanstiehl: As a regionalist, a media-ist, community relations-y kind of guy. I had been on the advertising club and I had given speeches. I was, in a sense, a public figure because I had been the face of WTOP Radio and later on television. I hadn't been on television except as a spokesman for CBS. I was hired by CBS as a spokesman. Before that I had been hired as spokesman for Warner Brothers. So I was known to the media.

Schrag: So what was in it for you to move from those media organizations to government service?

Pfanstiehl: One word: Kennedy.

Schrag: Okay. Tell me.

Pfanstiehl: Jack Kennedy had established a feeling among many of us liberals that government work, working for the greater good, was a great thing to do. It was exciting and that you would be a pioneer and do new things. All my life I have been working for the greater good, if you call working

in a camp for children with behavior problems, et cetera, et cetera. There was just a feeling in the air that it was wonderful to be part of this great, evolving, huge, do-good organization called the federal government. I had been at the Evening Star for a couple of years. The Evening Star -- well, to back up a little bit. The Evening Star had hired me because, as old Sam Kaufman, the patriarchal family of the Kaufman family that owned the Star, had said, “Cody, I used to be able to walk down F Street and pat the merchants on the back and say, ‘How is the wife and kids?’ and so forth. I can’t do that anymore.” This is after the war, the Star having been a hundred and fifty years old. So he said, “I want somebody, particularly when we move to our new building from downtown” -- they were at 11th and Penn[sylvania Avenue] and they moved out to their new plant. “I want somebody who can reunite the Star with the community.” He had known of my work at CBS and WTOP and the United Fund. So they hired me as their first community relations person in the hundred-and-fifty-year history of the Evening Star. So it was that.

And as an example, when I was hired I went out to the southeast segment of Washington where they were building this huge new building and talked to the PTAs and the merchants up on Capitol Hill and all that. They said, “What’s this big new building down there? We understand there are going to be trucks that will be running in and out and running over our kids, lousing up traffic.” I assured them that all the truck-drivers had ten kids of their own and were very careful and that there would be a X-hundred-thousand-dollar payroll every week that they could spend in their restaurants, et cetera, et cetera.

I guess it worked fairly well, because -- but after two or three years -- I got my chronology here; we can check that out -- the Evening Star was very much run by the family which had moved to Florida. The decisions were not so much our own. They began losing interest in becoming a community organization like that, and it was heading towards its last legs anyway. We didn’t know it at the time so much. So the Evening Star job had begun to be ho-hum, the same old thing,

even though I was fairly prominent in the Advertising Club because of the Star.

So when I got a chance to do something brand new -- I had always liked trains anyway, although at the time I was hired there was emphasis on rail, but the idea was more regional transportation planning. When that opened up I said I would do it. When I went home that night to my wife and said I've decided to take this job with the government, she looked at me for a moment. She said, "Does it have an expense account?" [Laughter]. Because at the Star I had an expense account. I said no. I never regretted that choice one single, single minute.

Now, there was another reason. Stolzenbach had given a speech to the local Washington, DC chapter of the Engineering Society. He had barred the press from coming in to that luncheon meeting. He did that because his nomination was still pending approval by the Hill, and he didn't think that he should be a public spokesman before he was officially named. But the [Washington] Post got very upset that couldn't cover this speech, and so they began, I guess you could say,

badmouthing him in the paper.

Shortly after I was hired, I met -- as I started going around saying “Hi, I’m the new guy” to the newspapers -- I met with Bill Gold, who was a very influential columnist. He had the Bob Levey space. Bill was a good old friend, because I had worked with him on lots of other things in my past incarnations. Bill said, “Cody, the Post will lay off Stolzenbach for a year because they hired you, but you had better open it up.” So that was my job. Indeed, I guess for at least a while they didn’t run so many critical articles.

Schrag: So this was your first task, taming the newspapers to give Stolzenbach some space.

Pfanstiehl: Yes, that’s right. Getting the trust of the newspapers to trust our agency. That one did by talking to them and telling them what the hell was happening.

Schrag: How much difference was there at this time between the Post and the Star?

Pfanstiehl: Oh, the Star was the big grandmotherly, grandfatherly paper, the good gray eminence down there. The Post was beginning to rise up, and

the Post was more liberal than the Star. But the Post was coming along very much. Don't forget, too, that predating that was Daily News and the Times-Herald, so we had four papers. When I was very active in publicizing Warner Brothers movies and starlets and stuff, there were four papers -- the feisty tabloid, the Daily News, and the good gray Star, the conservative Times-Herald, with its page three which had the sex stories on it (nothing like we have in the tabloids today), and then the Post.

Schrag: Okay. Was there resistance within the NCTA toward your publicity? That is, did you have any trouble nudging these people to let their work be seen?

Pfanstiehl: There is almost always a kind of resistance if not suspicion by a technical person of this guy who is not one of them, to that extent, and this guy who is going to tell all the secrets. I can't tell him anything because he's going to blab. So it wasn't hard, and I probably wasn't conscious of it at the time. But I was the fourth or fifth one hired, and so I was right in

on the ground floor. A staff meeting would be five guys sitting around a table. So I was in on the genesis of the thinking, and I was able to interpret that thinking in simple words for the outside, and they were able to trust me because I knew what was happening.

Of course, in the early, early days -- well, in the first couple of years, the highway lobby, which was very, very potent [and] still is, was dead set against this because they were fighting rail transit in all kinds of cities and particularly Washington. They would be damned if they were going to see this thing get started in the nation's capital. What I thought at the time would kill us, which was these articles about how this was no good and their facts were not right and so forth, put us on the front page most every day, because that was controversy. That was the thing that made us. The highway lobby really established us in the public eye by their attacks. That lasted for several years.

Schrag: And you think that was a good thing in the end?

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes, absolutely. It brought it out in the public for discussion. If they had shut up and not done anything, it would have happened anyway. It was inevitable. I'm sure that there would be a rapid-rail transit system, but it would have taken a longer time and it would not have had the public support that we eventually got, because all over -- and you must have run into this in histories of rail in other cities -- the highway people were beginning to carve up the cities. In Washington the word "Chinese wall" came in, which was an excellent term. They were going to run a loop, an inner loop, right around downtown. Literally it would have been a wall that knocked out -- that cut communities in half, that cut you off from your neighbor, and so on. So there was the mounting feeling by the neighborhood, by the guy on the block, "By God, I don't want those roads here." This was the super NIMBY thing. That, of course, continues. It's always been there for public works. When Boss Shepherd began tearing up the town, I'm sure they had that, too. But this began to culminate. When NCTA came along, there was now a focal point

for the growing unease, if not rage, that the public was feeling about the inhumane highway builders who were going to go through there. On the other hand, there were the people who sold concrete and cement and that sort of thing. I will never forget, however, a lunch that we had with the lobbyist for the asphalt institute -- I think it was the asphalt institute -- where we pointed out that if you build stations, which we would have to build for the train system, what are you going to pave the parking lots in? Oh, asphalt. What are you going to pave the new roads that you will have to build to get to those stations? Oh, asphalt. That I kept pushing, if you will, pointing out what would be the gain that the concrete people and the asphalt people and the steel people and all the planners and the whole caboodle [would get]. This was an economic goodie that they could get in on. It didn't totally turn off everything, but it had a lot to do with a beginning acceptance.

Schrag: So you were sort of driving almost a wedge into the highway lobby, because oil and car manufacturers and the truckers who are a big part

of the highway lobby would not have gotten those benefits.

Pfanstiehl: You bet. That's right. But you have to work where you can.

Schrag: You were talking to the newspapers. You had talked to the lobbyists, or what sort of contacts --

Pfanstiehl: No, I had very little to do, if anything, with the lobbyists. One of the secrets of success, I guess you could say, was I was available twenty-four hours a day to the media, which they really appreciated. A reporter would be on deadline, and there would be something they wanted to check. They could always find me. In the early days I had one of the very first walkie-talkies. It was a big klutzy thing, radio-telephone where you would telephone into the operator and she would dial the number that you wanted, but it made me available. I was always available and always had been and believed that that was one of the first things that you had to be.

Schrag: Where did the radio-telephone come from? Was that an agency --

Pfanstiehl: You could buy them like you buy cell phones now, but it was one of the very first.

Schrag: I just remember John Rannells wrote something about the NCTA, and he said that they had a photocopier when no one had a photocopier. For a tiny agency to have its own photocopier was a huge --

Pfanstiehl: That’s right. Of course, Darwin was a techie.

Schrag: Okay. Was he?

Pfanstiehl: He liked technical things, let’s put it that way. That’s perfectly -- I didn’t realize what you said, but that’s perfectly typical of him.

Schrag: I just wonder if the radio-telephone -- was that standard operating procedure at other agencies?

Pfanstiehl: No, it wasn’t. I had one of the first.

Schrag: Okay. I think I’ll put that in with the photocopier.

Pfanstiehl: Yes, I think you can. It wasn't unusual. It wasn't specially made up by Johns Hopkins [University] or something.

Schrag: Right. But my impression is that the NCTA was not your standard Washington bureaucracy.

Pfanstiehl: By no means. We had no lobby behind us. We had no economic force behind us. We had no history. We had no tabs out that we could cash in on in the whole government. We were the little kids standing on the corner.

Schrag: But you did have access to the White House.

Pfanstiehl: We had access to the White House, but that -- we never used it very much, I don't think. It was not that potent. What we had access to, by going out to every nook and cranny of the region, with Warren Quenstedt, who was then the deputy, who was brought in because he was a Virginia politician who had run against Joel Broyhill [and] had lost. Warren knew every political and other figure in northern Virginia, so he was the number two guy. He and Stolzenbach didn't get along very well, but Warren was absolutely necessary to keep Stolzenbach, if you want, from

the political dangers that he would run into. Warren and I worked up a slide show, which I must have given a thousand times. It started out with a big headline in the Washington Post from 1909 that said, “Why Not a Real Subway for Washington Now?” We showed that on the screen and held it there for a while. We would go out to every nook and cranny. We went out to some little town -- Dumfries, Virginia or something like that -- to a little wooden building. We climbed up two flights of stairs on the little narrow wooden stairs, and there was five guys sitting around. They were the volunteer fire department. When we came in [they said], “How are you, Warren? Glad to see you, Warren. What have you got for us?” [Laughter]. “Well, I’m here with my colleague, Cody Pfanstiehl. We want to tell you about this new thing.”

That kind of going out on the level of the community PTA meeting and sitting at the edge of the stage -- I made a point always of never standing behind the pulpit, behind the lectern. I would come out and sit on the edge of the stage or sometimes down on the floor. I bumped into a

guy last year who said, “I remember you from those early days. You used to come into the room, and the first thing you did was to take off your coat.” My jacket. He said, “At that point when you were in shirtsleeves, we knew this was going to be okay.” So there was that human contact was what I furnished to the agency, and the fact that they could get at us.

In the early days I had a call from a woman who had just moved into Prince George’s County. She said she used to be a League of Women Voters in Chicago or someplace like that. She had just moved here. She had just heard about this new thing that was going to help reduce the number of highways, and what was this all about. Well, my wife at the time was very active in the League of Women Voters. So we swapped lies about the League of Women Voters. I said, “Let me give you some materials on this. I’ll bring it out to your house.”

So on the way home -- it wasn’t on the way home; I had to go out to Prince George’s County and then back to Takoma Park -- I dropped off a lot of material about Metro. When I rang the

doorbell at six o'clock that night and identified myself, she said, "That's the first time the government has ever delivered anything to me like that so fast." She was our great friend. A couple of years later, who was the president of the League of Women Voters of Prince George's County? Same one. You multiply that by many, many, many, and you get the feeling that people began to hear about Metro and what it was doing, or NCTA.

Schrag: How did those tours, those slide shows, begin? Do you remember when they began?

Pfanstiehl: They would have begun in that first year, I believe, that I was hired, because I had given slide shows before for the United Fund all over the place. In fact, a lot of the places that we would call -- "Oh, yes, you were out here a couple of years ago. You told us about the United Fund." So it was a slide show -- that was my instrument. I put together these slides from various places. It was just the way one did. Perhaps one would take today a video or at least a film and show it. But the slide show was great

because you had your carousel and you just carried the little case around and set it up, squared it on the wall if you had to.

Schrag: So you took this technique from the United Fund and you said, “This is what we need to do to build support for this rapid transit system.”

Pfanstiehl: You had not to sit in your office. You had to get off your ass and get out in the neighborhoods.

Schrag: How did these people who were watching the slide show respond to the idea of a subway? It seems to me that in 1960 when people thought of subway -- they still do -- they thought of New York. They thought of dirt. They thought of crime. They thought of budget deficits.

Pfanstiehl: You’re absolutely right. Subways to them were rape, spit, and grime and dirt. So I showed them these clean pictures from Toronto and some of the newer systems. We had the Falls Church school board, when the first Falls Church station was put on a map and publicized -- “Oh, my God, these trains are going to come noisy by our school.” We took a bunch of people, among them

the Falls Church board people, up to Toronto. We were standing out in a field where they had their big loop turnaround, where the trains would come in and turn around and go over here to the barn. I was talking with her in the middle of the field. In fact, I was making a tape recording with her. She was talking about the noise. I said, “You know, a train just came by just in back of you.” She turned around, and there a hundred feet away a train had been rolling by very quiet. We took them out and showed them the stores in the Toronto subway that were pleasant and well-lit and that sort of thing. So it was through the slides [and] through taking these tours.

Schrag: How many people did you bring to Toronto?

Pfanstiehl: My guess would be a dozen or fifteen. I’m not sure, but it wasn’t a huge crowd. They were community leaders, of course, and PTA presidents and things like that. There was a car dealer in Prince George’s County who was gung ho against it. I think we chartered a plane for that and took them up -- I guess they took them to

Montreal. We showed them there, and we showed them the parking lots where all these cars that somebody had to have were parked. As much as we could, we showed people, had them experience it. Later on -- it's ahead of my story -- but I began taking people on tours through the tunnels, but that's getting ahead of the story.

Schrag: The next question about these slide shows is why did it matter? In some ways it seems that the decisions were made in the House District Committee, made up of these guys from South Carolina and Kentucky and Ohio. They were trying to decide whether they had to obey the highway lobby or listen to the president. What does someone sitting Falls Church, Virginia have to do with getting your program through Congress?

Pfanstiehl: "I'm beginning to feel a little bit like I'd like to get downtown to my job." Because don't forget, in those days the big center of gravity of jobs was downtown. The commuter -- although it wasn't anything like it is today. It was beginning to have a realization that getting downtown wasn't quite all that it used to be in

the horse and carriage days, and that also I could live farther from downtown if I could get in there quicker. One of our planners said, “If people could commute to the moon in forty-five minutes, we’d colonize the moon by now.” Forty-five minutes was the kind of planner’s circle of what people will spend in their commute. Anything after that they’ll look for other ways. So I don’t think I was that conscious of it in those days, but there was a feeling that something has to be done about getting me down to my government job or other job downtown.

Schrag: Did the House District Committee care about these people?

Pfanstiehl: Why should the House District Committee care about anything when they’re elected somewhere else?

Schrag: That’s what I’m asking you. It almost seems as if --

Pfanstiehl: No, they didn’t.

Schrag: I know that the NCTA was working on multiple fronts. You had Perlman and [Ed] Seeger talk in Congress, and then you would talk with the

locals. I understand their jobs a little bit better in the pre-Home Rule days, just because it almost seemed like the whole region could unite for one thing and the House District Committee wouldn't blink.

Pfanstiehl: Perlman was brought in later than what we've just been talking about. Perlman was brought in as a political operative, and he was good. He was a guy that I didn't like. In fact, he was put over me for a brief time until my staff said they would resign if he continued. But he was, as a political machinery guy, very good. So was Seeger. So I was not in -- in fact, Perlman said, and I totally agreed with him, "Look, you're not the lobbyist. You're not on Capitol Hill." Because I was not that sophisticated about what was happening on the Hill. So I wasn't privy to all of the "you owe me one, Senator" and that sort of stuff on Capitol Hill. But when the Hill people began to see in the newspapers and, I guess, hear from neighbors at cocktail parties that maybe there was something to this idea of having a subway system, that probably had some effect. But certainly it

wasn’t the effect that you have if you think you’re going to win a lot of votes. Of course, you know about the famous [William H.] Natcher holdup and all that kind of stuff.

Schrag: Yes. So you initiated these tours. You brought Quenstedt along because he was connected in Virginia. Was the situation in Maryland analogous? Did you have Maryland people who were equally well connected?

Pfanstiehl: [Carlton] Sickles. Believe me, Sickles, and later early on, Cleatus Barnett, but he was the quiet guy. Sickles was a Maryland connection and very strong.

Schrag: This is one of the things I’m having trouble with is the relationship between the NCTA and the joint transportation committee that sort of later -- it’s sort of WMATA’s two parents, if you will. At times it seems that they were not coordinating well, that there was some, if not tension, at least distance between the groups, the sort of federal group and the local group.

Pfanstiehl: That’s right. We were the federal group that gave birth, because in the original

legislation it said -- and you probably read this -- that the NCTA, the government agency, should work out a plan and hand the whole thing over to the region. Of course, that was the WMATA. In fact, we paralleled for six months I think. Undoubtedly there were differences of opinion. From my memory -- and, of course, I'm always the eternal optimist. I always just see the good parts or just remember the good parts. It was a smooth transition, because after all, we were the same people. It wasn't a new crowd brought in. Once again, as the NCTA we didn't have a lot of muscle. We built public opinion, but we didn't have muscle.

Schrag: So Sickles was doing his best to promote your plans in Maryland.

Pfanstiehl: He was a believer, yes.

Schrag: I think we're talking about the period prior to 1963. I'm trying to understand how things changed. That is, certainly when the November 1962 report comes out there is a lot of controversy.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, there sure was. The highway lobby said, “Show us the backup.” That was the battle cry: “Show us the backup!” Of course, whatever backup figures we had, they would say, “Well, they’re no good.” That was their way of getting back at it. Stolzenbach was very defensive about the figures. Tom Deen and the others were battling some of their old colleagues in the highway industry. But the November report did put things on the record, that we could build a system for -- what was it? -- $791 million or some figure like that.

Schrag: Did that change your job when that report was published?

Pfanstiehl: No, not really. It changed it to the extent that we could now point to a map, and we could point to certain physical things, like there was not just a subway -- it was on the surface, too -- and that sort of thing. We had then the beginnings of something you could put your finger on, even if it was a piece of paper which was a map.

Schrag: Now, speaking of maps, I’ve looked at the map that was proposed in 1962 with the ultimate ARS

from 1968. Of course, the WMATA system is both larger and more finely balanced. We give every jurisdiction a little bit of this.

Pfanstiehl: You bet it was.

Schrag: It was incredibly balanced. When the ’62 report came out and you went out to these communities and gave your talk, did people say, “Why is there this line out I-66 and not enough in” --

Pfanstiehl: Oh, all the time, and I got pretty good at answering those questions. “Why don’t you get more of them out in Prince George’s” and blah, blah, blah. Then I would go into my basic spiel. There would be the map of the region. It would show that Montgomery County was on the north of the District and just a little bit tiny after the point of the District, that Prince George’s had much more frontier on the District than Montgomery County had. Prince George’s opted to have four short lines reaching out to be extended later, as indeed happened. Montgomery, which had the wedges and corridors concept, opted for two lines. So that was county decisions. One of the things that I constantly battled was people

thinking that Metro simply drew a map and imposed that on the system, on the city. We could not have turned a spoonful of dirt in any of the jurisdictions unless they had said okay. Montgomery County said, “We want two lines.”

Schrag: When was this? This was under the NCTA?

Pfanstiehl: From the time the first map came out there was the idea, I believe, that Prince George’s County [sic] wanted to have the two shorter lines. Of course, you run across the wedges and corridors plan, and that was very important. Let me back up for just a minute. One of the fundamental concepts that had to be settled very early on was do we plan what the region will be or does the region tell us what they want. You can run a road, and houses will build on it. You can run your railroad up, and that will be where the congestion comes in. The wedges and corridors plan was beautiful if they had stuck to it. But, of course, they didn’t stick to it because the developers, et cetera, and you know the story there. But Montgomery from the beginning had it together. That’s why the

Montgomery lines were built first, because there wasn't that much controversy about where the lines should go. One couple in northeast Washington held up the Green Line for years and years because, by God, they weren't going to have tunnel go up in front of their house. So they got to the city and they said, "No, it shall not be built."

All the fuss about where the various lines go. Why don't you put the line right up between Montgomery County and Prince George's? No, because then Montgomery County people using the line will come into Prince George's and we'll have to pay for those guys, and vice versa. So there was that kind of thing. Who is going to use it from which jurisdiction? Therefore, who will pay for it?

Let me digress for just a minute. One of the big problems in financing was how you split up the cost, of course. Stop me if you know this -- the Sector Zero concept, where it was obvious from the beginning that it had to be a radial system. That's the way transit works, from many to one area. Where was I on the --

Schrag: The origins of Sector Zero.

Pfanstiehl: Sector Zero. What we did for the financing was take the cost of the entire thing, then we carved out the middle of the pie, which is downtown. We divided the middle of the pie up for cost according to the total figures. This way the District -- if the District had had to pay for its one-third share, no way, because there were so many lines in the District. But it was obvious that the lines would be used by Prince Georgians and so forth. So we took that Sector Zero and carved it up proportionately to what the whole region was, and that was the way that the finance plan was finally settled, because that was a pretty good discussion early on, too.

Schrag: Under the NCTA. I'm trying to understand the difference between the NCTA map and the Airlie House map. It seems like there were different priorities and different processes going on there.

Pfanstiehl: I couldn't -- I don't know that I can be too much help on that. My feeling is that the

regional map made by a regional organization was much more regional than a government agency map made by the government, that the influence of the suburbs as the politicians began waking up to the fact that they had better make some decisions about this, that that would change the map. Plus, as I said before, the fact that Montgomery wanted two [lines] because of the layout of Montgomery, and four in Prince George's. And Arlington told us very early, "Look, we are the doormat for Northern Virginia. In order to get to Fairfax County, you've got to run over or under us. So we're going to tell you where to go." They told us flat out they did not want a line that would draw the congestion and draw development on the Potomac side. They wanted to stay away from that, so they stretched their lines out to get through Arlington as quickly as they could out to Fairfax to get those cars underground, get the people underground, so they wouldn't come flooding through Arlington. That was Arlington's push for it. Of course, down towards Mount Vernon and that sort of thing,

things were pretty thin and the attendant need for it wasn't felt as much.

Schrag: So things got bad for the NCTA in 1963. There were, as I understand it, signals from the Hill that they were not going to fund the whole system, and people start coming up with all sorts of truncated systems to propose. Eventually one of those gets voted down in, I guess, November or early December '63.

Pfanstiehl: It could be. That was interesting, because Perlman -- when it was voted down, we were all very glum. "Oh, it will never pass." Perlman said, "Forget that. When you suffer your first defeat, you find out who your enemies are -- black and white almost. Then you go to work on the guys who didn't." That's what he did, and that's what won eventually.

Schrag: That's very helpful. But you also had budget cutbacks at that point, as I understand. That changed the flavor of work. Did you notice a change in morale after that defeat?

Pfanstiehl: We never were totally down in the dumps because we were a crusading crew. While there

were a whole period before the Natcher thing, and during the Natcher holdup, we were never throwing up our hands by any means, because we all felt it was a mission. This was a bit like NASA. We were gung ho. We knew each other. The core group of us had known each other, and we had been through a lot to get there.

Schrag: Who was that core group?

Pfanstiehl: There was Stolzenbach, Quenstedt, Pfanstiehl, at the beginning, [Tom] Deen, a guy named John Rannells, Howard Lyon, who was one of the engineers. I'd have to go back through some of the names.

Schrag: Seeger probably as well.

Pfanstiehl: Ed Seeger, yes, definitely.

Schrag: I'm trying to figure out who was connected to whom in this whole matrix and who the --

Pfanstiehl: You could almost go by the year they were hired, because I'm trying to think when it began getting more bureaucratic and bigger. That was fairly much later after WMATA was formed.

Schrag: So it was a fairly tight organization.

Pfanstiehl: Yes.

Schrag: There were some divisions, as I've heard.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes. When we got the guy from Chicago in who had been head of the Chicago agency --

Schrag: [Walter] McCarter?

Pfanstiehl: No. The engineer.

Schrag: Forsythe?

Pfanstiehl: Forsythe. Stanley Forsythe wanted to change all kinds of stuff. He was kind of far out on technology, and Stolzenbach had to hold him down. Finally he disappeared from the scene. When Harry Weese came in, Harry wanted to be the city planner. He was moving lines around. That -- of course, they were much too established. But Harry had his idea. He was going to be the [Pierre] L'Enfant.

Schrag: So that was not part of what he was hired to do. That's something he wanted.

Pfanstiehl: That's right. He figured that it was part of what he was hired to do, but there was no way he was going to do that.

Schrag: As I understand it -- I'm not quite sure of the dates here -- but once the Airlie House conference happens -- I guess it was in '68 though. Is that right? When the basic map was established?

Pfanstiehl: I don't know. I'd have to go look.

Schrag: The impression I get is that it's this incredible clockwork mechanism of political swaps and that if you pulled one station out, the whole thing was going to collapse.

Pfanstiehl: Yes. To the extent that it would change a plan that you had proposed, yes. Then people could say, "Well, if you're going to keep changing it, you'll never get anything done." It was true.

Schrag: So we're in sort of '63. Some cutbacks to budget. I guess the staff was reduced at that point.

Pfanstiehl: I suppose.

Schrag: And one of the things I've noticed is just the difference in appearance between the November '62 report and the 1965 Rail Rapid Transit. Rail Rapid Transit looks like it came right off the

typewriter from some poor agency working in the basement. It's not typeset. There is maybe one map, no pictures or something. It's a humble looking document compared to the 1962 documents.

Pfanstiehl: In '62 it was federally funded.

Schrag: So was '65.

Pfanstiehl: I guess that's true, yes.

Schrag: But federally funded at a lower level.

Pfanstiehl: I don't know that we had that much backup material either later on, because so many of these things have been thrashed out by that time.

Schrag: When did things begin to get hot for Stolzenbach? It seems that -- when did he begin to think that he was not going to --

Pfanstiehl: What year did he leave?

Schrag: He left in 1965 around March, so he sort of put out the 1965 report -- I think that was in February -- and then said that's it. But my sense is, and this is just -- it's very hard because I have these tapes that he made where he was asking the questions, but he would always sort of tell some stories of his own. He often

talked more than the person he was interviewing. My sense is that by some time in 1964 he was sort of beginning to realize that --

Pfanstiehl: That was probably right.

Schrag: Do you have a sense of where that pressure was coming from? Did Kennedy's death change things?

Pfanstiehl: Yes. Kennedy was the liberal flag-holder. I really couldn't tell you when there was a change in Stolzenbach's attitude except people kept carping at him more and more. I don't even know who suggested to him that he leave.

Schrag: I'm trying to track that down. I don't quite know why he resigned.

Pfanstiehl: I don't really know. Again, Sickles and Barnett would be your sources, particularly Sickles. He would know even better than I did. See, I was Mr. Outside. I kept a lot of me inside so that I knew what was happening. But for deep strategy sessions and stuff like that, I wasn't in that and I didn't have to be because there was so much to do on the Mr. Outside.

Schrag: Did that -- what I'm trying to figure out is did that outside impression of the agency or of the

project change substantially as all of these things were going on in the inside, or were you just projecting that same image of we're going to have what Toronto has and it will be great?

Pfanstiehl: Certainly we were projecting the image of having a modern system with up-to-date technology and cleanliness and all the God and motherhood things. But the -- Stolzenbach was -- the reason they got Stolzenbach's successor in, of course, was to have a good gray eminence who was respected in the transit world. Stolzenbach was pretty much a theoretician. He wasn't the guy who would get dirty and build it. When they got in our man McCarter from Chicago, he was pulled in for that very reason. In fact, Johnson had to call him up on the beach -- he was down in the islands at the time -- and get him off the beach literally to come up and run this. He didn't want to do it at first, but when the president calls you do it. So he was the great answer to a theoretical, controversial -- [intercom interruption].

I've got to get her up to a doctor's appointment. We're going to continue this. I'd like to do it.

Schrag: Oh, sure. We could leave it at McCarter just because that's a clear breaking point.

Pfanstiehl: That's a good cutoff.

Schrag: Okay. I just wonder if there are any last comments you have about the Stolzenbach era. Particularly I guess I'd be interested in your perception -- Stolzenbach is constantly described as a lightning rod. He went up in front of people and he told them what he really thought.

Pfanstiehl: You bet he did. [Laughter]. That's one of his problems. There are two ways to do that. You can tell it so they can accept it, or you can just by God tell them.

Schrag: And you just -- my impression is that being his spokesman could not have been an easy job. You would have been the elephant brigade.

Pfanstiehl: I wasn't Stolzenbach's spokesman as much as I was spokesman for the idea. I was spokesman for the agency. I was spokesman for our mission. In a sense, Stolzenbach was taking care of himself, because more and more I was the one that

was out talking to the Kiwanis Clubs and things like that. More and more he would talk to the engineers' society now and then. He wouldn't talk to the local PTA.

Schrag: But the local PTA picks up the Washington Post, and the headline is "Stolzenbach says build highways anywhere" or something.

Pfanstiehl: That's right.

Schrag: Did they ask questions about that? Did you have to clean up after him at all?

Pfanstiehl: I don't recall -- and again, don't forget that I'm the eternal optimist. I don't recall having to defend the man as one would defend Nixon. [Laughter]. No. I would defend -- I would explain and thus defend the idea and what we had. When people found it hard to believe that there was really going to be a system as we got closer to it, I printed up thousands and thousands of little fare cards. We gave them out by the thousands. They said "free ride on opening day" and it had a magnetic stripe on it. Hell, we were going to give free rides on opening day anyway. But for years afterwards people

would come up [and say], “I’ve got one of your cards.” We built a prototype. I guess I’m getting ahead of the story. We built a prototype of half a car and we put it on a trailer. We tooled it around the beltway to the consternation of some drivers who were coming along and here was a Metro car behind them. We would park it at malls and let people go in and sit down on the seats and make it seem real. That was the kind of thing that my job was, to make a dream seem real, because it was real.

Schrag: Okay. That sounds like a good stopping place for now. We’ll have a lot more to talk about.

Pfanstiehl: Yes. I find this as fascinating as you do.

Schrag: Okay. I’ll stop the tape now.

[End of Session].

Session 2

4 January 2000

Schrag: Zachary Schrag is interviewing Cody Pfanstiehl. It is Tuesday, January 4th, 2000.

Pfanstiehl: The year 2000, the millennium!

Schrag: This is our second session. We are at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland. When we talked last time we had sort of ended with the coming of McCarter and Stolzenbach's resignation. But I have a couple of follow-up questions about the Stolzenbach era. The first is, after reading some of the correspondence from inside the NCTA after your bill failed dramatically in December 1963, in January '64 you write a memo, Quenstedt writes a memo, everyone writes a memo about what he thinks went wrong. Your memo shows we didn't do enough to reach out to the community.

Pfanstiehl: Each of us in our own disciplines.

Schrag: Exactly.

Pfanstiehl: Mea culpa.

Schrag: So Seeger can tell you what went wrong on the Hill. You say what went wrong in community

services. I guess my question is, at that point you say you need to go out into the community more, ask their help, and that will build support. If people think you're listening to them, they will actually support you. Do you remember if that changed your actual -- what you were doing? It almost seems that that's what you had been doing before.

Pfanstiehl: I certainly was doing it before and very, very effectively. I guess I would have to say that we just had to do more of it, because I was a little naïve and thought that if you could build up a real big ground swell that it could change Congress, because we were up against not just the politicians of this immediate area who were in immediate contact with the people that I had been talking to, but also the congressmen who had come from Kiakuk and Huntsville. Yes, it was just redouble our efforts, I think.

Schrag: So it was just more of the same is what you were proposing.

Pfanstiehl: There was no big change in what we were doing as far as outreach goes.

Schrag: My second question about the Stolzenbach era is if you just have any more stories that might help me might make sense of his character, any favorite stories about either inside of the agency or his relations outside.

Pfanstiehl: Well, he was a two or three martini man at lunch. He would call occasionally -- maybe I told you this. He would call occasionally at twelve, one, two in the morning, and you'd just hear heavy breathing for a while. Finally I would say, "Yes, Darwin? What is it?" Then he would say, "I've got this idea, Cody." I'm sure he did it to other people too. In that sense, he was indefatigable and he would stay up late and work. I never knew him to come to work drunk or anything like that, but he certainly had his two-martini lunches or tee-martooni lunches.

Schrag: That was not so unusual in Washington in 1962, is my sense of it.

Pfanstiehl: Well, in some circles it's not unusual today. I don't know that it was unusual for many people who were going at a big pace and pushing

themselves as he was. He was carrying the flag, his own flag to do something about the highways.

Schrag: Did he ever think that he had made a big mistake? That is, just in terms of being so undiplomatic at times?

Pfanstiehl: I don't think so. He was pretty much an egotist, sure of himself, plunging onward, the hell with what's around. I don't recall him ever saying, "I made a mistake." He may have had private thoughts. I don't know.

Schrag: But he never came back from a speech and said, "I wish I hadn't said that."

Pfanstiehl: Not that I recall, no. It wouldn't sound like my memories of him.

Schrag: McCarter -- to bring him in -- seems to me to have been much more diplomatic.

Pfanstiehl: McCarter was a genius. He was exactly what was needed. The history of Metro general managers is the right person at the right time. McCarter was absolutely what was needed. You probably know more than I do about who recruited him. But he was the practical guy. He had built a system. He had run a practical system. He had

rejuvenated his own system. As he used to say, "I had to build it on my grandfather's bones," which is what the Chicago system was. But McCarter was down-key and pipe-smoking, and he sort of smiled at you and that sort of thing. I told you what he said when he gathered us all for the first meeting: "You guys do your jobs, but if you get me in trouble, you're in trouble." He did leave it to us a great deal each in our departments of what to do. But he had dealt with an operating system, and he had dealt with a fractious public in Chicago, so he had an appreciation for people that Darwin didn't have. Darwin was sort of a proud guy. You didn't feel you could go and put your feet up and talk to him. I'm sure that citizens didn't feel that either.

Schrag: That's interesting. But he run the -- Stolzenbach did run the NCTA on a first-name basis, is my sense.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes.

Schrag: It was much less formal than most Washington bureaucracies.

Pfanstiehl: We were small. Bureaucracy hadn't set in. That was what was great about it. At first it was five guys sitting around the table. At the end of each day, the beginning of the next day, you could get together and say, "What did you do yesterday?" And we all knew -- it was great for me because I would then have my finger on really the pulse of what was happening, what happened over at the planning commission, blah, blah, blah. As it grew more and more, that pioneering "we are all together as pioneers" [attitude] stayed in for quite a while, I would say even through the groundbreaking and that sort of thing before bureaucracy set in on a fairly big way.

One of the things that I was uncomfortable with was that the general manager at the time -- I can't think which one it was -- put in a woman who he put in as sort of a super communications director. I was told not to spend my time on all this going out stuff. That was when I began to really have doubts about how much use I could be for it at the time. So, yes, it used to be in the early days when the trains are running I could go up into the engineer's compartment and

talk to everybody on the train. I did that once when we got stalled in a tunnel there. Did I tell you that story?

Schrag: No.

Pfanstiehl: The train was stalled in the tunnel between Lafayette Square and -- no, between Judiciary Square and the station, Union Station. We were just sitting there in the dark. So I went up and got on the PA and gave them a brief history of the bridge that Congress had taken two years to authorize for something like eighty thousand dollars over Tiber Creek. “And, folks, we are now sitting under Tiber Creek, but we’re going to get out of here before two years.” When we pulled into the next station, I got out and was talking to some people on the platform. They said, “It’s the first time a train ever gave me history.” But you can’t ever do that today because of safety rules and all those other things. It was so much more free-wheeling.

Schrag: So that free-wheeling style remained well into operation then.

Pfanstiehl: For a lot of us, but it began to really get down -- I would guess around groundbreaking it began to get a little bureaucratic after that. Adversity, of course, pulls people together. When we didn't make it on the first try in Congress, we were still the little band fighting our good fight.

Schrag: Another thing about McCarter, of course, is that he was from Chicago. The original -- or Stolzenbach's NCTA seems to me very much a product of local people. There was you, there was Stolzenbach --

Pfanstiehl: [unclear] Montgomery County politics.

Schrag: Quenstedt, Seeger. These are people who may not have been born here -- not that many people are --

Pfanstiehl: McCarter was the first really outsider of the region to have any influence really.

Schrag: Okay. So how did that affect the agency's operations?

Pfanstiehl: The big consultant, the big brains, is the guy that comes from the farther distance away, as the old saying goes. He had come from away. I'm

sure he could have a better perspective being from away. He could tell what we were not doing that was practical that would get us going. From the outsiders, he could say, “Well, now in Chicago” -- which was his favorite phrase, and we used to twig him about that -- “in Chicago we did it this way,” which really was saying, “This is the practical way to do it.” That appealed to the reporters, I’m sure, and the citizen leaders who would meet him, that he had actually run a hands-on system and he was not just a theoretician. Darwin was a theoretical guy; he had never run a system.

Schrag: Did McCarter have any trouble? I imagine, for example, he would have to learn the neighborhoods to understand that the station at Connecticut and Ordway was going to serve all those highway protesters.

Pfanstiehl: He caught on to that very quickly. He knew the whole NIMBY psychology, if you will. While he couldn’t say immediately that 33rd Street comes at the Prospect Avenue corner and stuff like that, but he had a very knowledgeable community

relations staff -- not just me but a couple of others that I've given you -- they are Herb Leonard and so on -- who knew the city pretty much backwards and forwards. That kind of thing he would leave to the community relations people. He also -- I guess he was the one that inaugurated at each station site, within the engineers' structure, he would have a community relations contact, which was in those days a little bit new. Above all, the Army Corps of Engineers had had the reputation of just coming in and riding roughshod over community relations, community feelings. This helped a great deal to dispel the idea that we're the big monster that didn't give a hoot for the people in the neighborhood.

Schrag: One general question I have for you then is to what extent was that feeling and to what extent was it reality? That is, you can have public hearings, you can have someone answering the phone, but to some extent in some organizations -- for example, student government in high school.

Pfanstiehl: Going through the motions.

Schrag: Exactly. Students have a voice, but it just doesn’t happen to matter.

Pfanstiehl: To a large extent we knew what they were going to say, but it was the best thing in the world to let them blow off steam. Now, I couldn’t point out a specific that changed the huge design of a station or something like that. I’m sure there were cases -- and you’d have to go through all of those tapes from all of the hearings -- where the entrance was put to the other side of the street or something like that. But the feeling that they had at least had their say would take the wind out of some people’s sails.

There were a couple of big exceptions. One of them was the people up on -- I’ll think of it in a minute -- where two dentists got together and made great big scare stories about high-pressured gas lines underneath the street that when we hit them would blow it up. The sound would be terrible. The guy was a naval engineer, acoustic engineer. He took the sounds as they are propagated through water instead of through earth and things like that. They caused delays.

Schrag: Was this the Yuma Street?

Pfanstiehl: Yuma. Absolutely, the whole Yuma story. But even there -- and did I ever tell you how that was touched off?

Schrag: No, go ahead.

Pfanstiehl: We're in a big citizen meeting -- not a hearing but a citizen meeting -- in the high school up there. One of our engineers, who had a foreign accent -- the woman asked him, "I understand that" -- oh, she had called up Metro and she had gotten a hold of the engineering department. She said, "I live on the corner of 43rd and Yuma" -- or whatever it was -- "and I understand that they're going to take my house and drill a hole right there." He looks on his engineering plans, the preliminary plans, that had generally we need to locate an air shaft right here -- generally. Well, he points out where it is. She said, "Oh, my God, that's my house on the corner." Of course, we were never going to go through a house. We were going to go next door, vacant lot, or whatever it was. But because he did not realize what would happen, she

immediately went out and got on her Paul Revere horse and said, “They’re going to dig a shaft and ruin the neighborhood.” From that sprang a lot of the Yuma Street unrest, but that was an engineer who had no feeling for the community relations. It took a long time to calm things down there.

Schrag: And a lot of money, I take it. I’ve been reading through some of these --

Pfanstiehl: Insofar as delay is money, yes, certainly.

Schrag: I guess the other case -- I’m not quite sure on that. Was there an Oklahoma Avenue station that was canceled?

Pfanstiehl: Down by the stadium.

Schrag: By the stadium.

Pfanstiehl: A wonderful, wonderful woman there. She was a leader -- her name is somewhere in the records -- of the whole neighborhood out there by the stadium and the big parking lot. I used to go out there fairly often, maybe once every couple of months, with the engineering plans and show her. There came a time when the engineering began to get a little more specific. It showed

an aerial structure going through the parking lot right next to Oklahoma Avenue, and she lived on the other side of Oklahoma Avenue. I remember sitting in her drawing room. She was a perfect lady, a wonderful gal. She said, “Oh, Mr. Pfanstiehl, that will not do.” [Laughter]. So she began to put lots of pressure, and by golly, the line was then moved away from her house into the parking lot where it is today. But it was a perfect example of bringing our plans out [and] letting the people have their say.

I was not the one to say, “Let’s put the thing next to Oklahoma Avenue,” so I didn’t try to defend that when I sat with her. I would say, “That’s what the engineers are saying now, but if you don’t like it, let’s talk about it.” And they moved it.

Schrag: Do you think that was a good process? It almost seems that a few squeaky wheels could have too much power.

Pfanstiehl: They do, depending on what the situation is. Take the line going up through Takoma Park. It’s alongside the railroad, the big railroad. There

was a row of trees -- and I could take you up to look at that exact spot -- a row of trees between the railroad and the street. On the other side of the street were these fine old houses. One of the houses was occupied by a woman and her husband, who was a forestry guy or worked for the arboretum or something like that. The original drawings said that those trees would have to go because they had to grade the side for the construction or something like that. They raised holy heck. By golly, they convinced the engineers that they could do it without it. In fact, as I recall, they came up and said, “If you make the grade thirty percent instead of forty-five percent” -- or whatever it was -- “you will save the trees.” And the trees were indeed saved. Every time I go by there on Metro now I look out and think of that. That was a direct result of informed citizen input coming into it.

Schrag: Interesting. At some time the NCTA as an institution learned to stop talking about highways. That, I think, actually began under Stolzenbach. That is, the 1965 report, Rail Rapid Transit -- I’m not sure the word highways

is in there. It certainly doesn't talk about canceling any highways.

Pfanstiehl: Wasn't there a highway plan in that?

Schrag: I don't think so. I think that was the difference between the '62 and the '65 plan.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, the '65 report, okay.

Schrag: The '62 plan had the whole highway plan and canceling the Three Sisters Bridge and had all this detail about what to do. The '65 report says, "Here is the transit system we want to build," and that was that. It wasn't pro-highway and it wasn't against highway. It was a withdrawal.

Pfanstiehl: Warren Quenstedt, the politician from northern Virginia, was brought in by the [Jimmy] Carter -- Carter administration? -- by the administration anyway, the US administration -- as an antidote to Stolzenbach's egregious rapport with politicians and the public. Warren, of course, was a practical political person who saw that you just couldn't ask -- that it was asking for trouble if you continued to battle the highways. So Warren as much as anybody was

responsible for toning that down. Once again, our Montgomery County guy, Barnett, can tell you about that because he was there. Barnett is going to be very important. You haven't talked to him yet?

Schrag: No. I'll put that on my list.

Pfanstiehl: He was very important, very important for those early days and things like we're just talking about.

Schrag: I want to move on to the subject of architecture. I described that I'm trying to put this chapter together. You were on the committee to choose an architect. Is that right? Was that your first involvement in architecture for the system?

Pfanstiehl: Certainly it was in any formal way. I did not sit and doodle and say we ought to design them like this. Certainly it was my first exposure to the pros and cons of square boxes versus vaulted stations and so forth.

Schrag: Why were you involved at all?

Pfanstiehl: Because, I would like to say, the general manager saw that the look of the stations would be very important to Joe Blow of the public. So

he wanted a person in there who could say, “Wait a minute. If we do this, the neighbors won’t think it matches.”

Schrag: Which general manager was that?

Pfanstiehl: Who was general manager when we -- it was McCarter.

Schrag: Stolzenbach -- some of the things he did sort of on the way out, and one of them was to, I think, get the Commission of Fine Arts involved. I’m not sure of that, but there is some correspondence.

Pfanstiehl: Well, if he didn’t get them involved, they, believe me, became involved, because they, in a sense, were jealous. This was some organization coming in to build huge things in their city -- their city! So they were going to be involved, and they had to be involved legally anyway because you can’t build around here without bumping into the Commission of Fine Arts and its standards.

Schrag: Interesting. So do you think that Stolzenbach was reluctant to --

Pfanstiehl: He was reluctant to have anybody tell him what to do, but he certainly saw -- and he paid many visits over there. He certainly saw the necessity of getting them on his side.

Schrag: Why was that? Why was that necessary?

Pfanstiehl: Because they're very, very, very important. You couldn't build it without their okay.

Schrag: Legally they're only an advisory commission.

Pfanstiehl: Well, that may be legal. [Laughter].

Schrag: I'm trying to figure out who was listening to them. Was it the NCPC [National Capital Planning Commission]? Was it the administration? Who cared if -- the Jefferson Memorial, for example, was built without CFA approval quite famously. [Franklin D.] Roosevelt just did it. I'm not saying Metro could have done the same thing, but I'm not sure I understand it couldn't have.

Pfanstiehl: Well, I couldn't tell you legally. I guess you'd have to go back to read the mandate of the commission and see what they legally could do. I know we knew that if they turned against it and said, "This is absolutely terrible," we'd be in big trouble.

Schrag: That’s sort of a vague dread or anyone in particular would be in your way?

Pfanstiehl: There you have to go to Rannells and Bill Herman. Bill Herman is your man on that, relations with the Fine Arts Commission, because he was the chief planner.

Schrag: Okay. McCarter gets you on the committee. What can you tell me about that selection process? How did Harry Weese get the job?

Pfanstiehl: We followed the protocol, which is to put out a request for bids. I don’t know, any number of -- one of those books has the number. Twenty or thirty firms at least applied, some of the great big ones -- Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and so forth. They came in -- all but one of the firms came in with big drawings of concrete and cement and were going to use 2x4s and 6x8s and technical kind of engineering stuff.

Harry Weese -- and this is almost literal -- came in with very little charts and graphs and easels, put his feet up on the desk, so to speak, and said, “Now, let’s think about what kind of a city Washington is. What kind of people live in Washington?

What is the personality of Washington?" We were sold right then, because he was the people person. We wanted somebody who had designed buildings that had to do with people -- libraries and things where people would be walking in and out. Harry had done things like that, too. But it was Harry's approach not from a concrete and masonry world but from a -- I hesitate to say sociological, but that's pretty much true, from a people world. That as much as anything else had to do with his selection, particularly when it was stacked up against some of the great big construction firms who had been building dams and things like that.

Schrag: But the architectural firms had not been doing dams.

Pfanstiehl: Well, Harry Weese --

Schrag: You had a separate engineering consultant. That became DeLeuw Cather.

Pfanstiehl: Which was -- when they were separated, the engineering and the architecture, that was a real -- [telephone rings].

Schrag: Should I pause this?

Pfanstiehl: No. We separated -- McCarter separated engineering from architecture. In the organization of Metro they were put on the same level, which was a very, very significant thing. It set up a rivalry, sure, but it was a productive kind of thing. So we would have input from both, instead of engineering saying, “We are also over the architects.” That was very important in the planning. I think we were probably one of the first, if not the first, big rapid transit organizations to make that separation.

Schrag: That sounds right. So when you were looking at architects, you were comparing Weese to Skidmore.

Pfanstiehl: X, Y, and Z -- the biggies.

Schrag: I don’t know all the names.

Pfanstiehl: Somewhere there’s a list.

Schrag: I’ve got them written down. But these would have been other modernist architects as well.

Pfanstiehl: Yes, probably. I don’t recall that anybody came in with monorails or something like that. They were probably mentioned somewhere along the line. That dogged us for a long time, the idea

of monorails. But the people approach of Harry was absolutely what did it.

Harry went on from there, however, and there was some contention because he wanted to redesign the shape of the system, too. He wanted to go up 18th Street. The lady at the planning commission didn't want to and so on. Then we had to -- I didn't have to but other people had to hold Harry back from saying, "Now, wait a minute. The Congress has authorized that we go up here along that street, blah, blah, blah." There was that difference of opinion between Harry.

Schrag: Truth be told, he was right that the map was hardly fixed when he came on board. That is, it was redrawn at Airlie House next summer.

Pfanstiehl: Yes. It was constantly refined and redrawn, sure, but not to Harry's complete satisfaction. [Laughter].

Schrag: It seems this is sort of the origins of the Green Line, which was not really there in the '65 plan. It was put in as another line. He's got some sketches from 1966. It wasn't completely crazy

for him to say that there maybe should be another mid-city line.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, no. I imagine that a lot of what he said was perfectly good and, as you say, it probably turned out. But he was not the one that had to convince Congress. He was not the one that had to raise the extra money. In that, he was a bit theoretical.

Schrag: Do you remember who at the NCTA really cared about architecture?

Pfanstiehl: Rannells.

Schrag: Rannells was in charge. He was the chief of architecture. My impression is, from Kent Cooper, that Gutheim on the advisory board was important in making sure that architecture would be given its due.

Pfanstiehl: Absolutely. Fritz was an outside force on the solar system whose gravity, whose solar pressure, was felt. Yes. He had a great deal of unofficial but beneficial -- “Wait a minute now, you guys. Don’t go totally mechanical.”

Schrag: That’s hard for me to track down -- unofficial influence -- but it seems like it was very

important. Do you have any examples of things that Gutheim said or how he made his desires known?

Pfanstiehl: No, because he didn't deal through me. He would have lunch with Stolzenbach and whoever, but I was not included. That was not my area.

Schrag: Do you know if he had any particular -- if Gutheim had any particular feelings about Weese?

Pfanstiehl: My first impression is that he admired Weese, but I could be wrong on that. I don't know.

Schrag: It seems that there would have been a connection just because Gutheim was an admirer of Alto and Saarinen, the Finns, and Weese was their student.

Pfanstiehl: I would not be at all surprised if Gutheim wasn't a real booster for Weese.

Schrag: As I go back through these sketches that Weese produced -- first these color magic marker drawings in July 1966 --

Pfanstiehl: The station designs?

Schrag: Yes. They're in Allan's book [Stan Allan, <u>For the Glory of Washington</u>]. And then later these

perspective sketches. It's a little hard for me to understand how seriously they were taken on your end.

Pfanstiehl: You mean from a community relations end?

Schrag: Yes. Well, from the agency end. You personally, for example -- you get these magic marker sketches, and did that seem like a great leap forward or was he still asking as many questions? Part of the difficulty for me is the captions on those things say things like, "The riders should not be held captive. It should be a pleasant experience," as if anyone would argue the other way.

Pfanstiehl: That's right. God and motherhood.

Schrag: Yes, exactly, some real kind of platitudes. Do you remember your reaction to any of Weese's presentations?

Pfanstiehl: I don't remember that I didn't like them. Did I tell about slower-lower and cheaper-deeper?

Schrag: No.

Pfanstiehl: Oh. We would have weekly meetings between the architects and the engineers in the big board

room. The architects had their -- the architects-planners and the engineers. It was really planners [and] engineers coming together, coordinating, arguing, and so on. The engineers -- if they had their way (and I exaggerate a little) would have simply gone underground eight hundred feet and gone straight here, straight there, because there were no obstacles. There were no sewers or rivers or anything else. The engineers would say, “Hey, it’s cheaper deeper. You just go down and you build a tunnel. What the hell.” But the planners would say, “Yes, but it’s slower lower,” meaning, if you are six hundred feet underground and you’ve got to take a six-hundred-foot escalator to go down and it takes you ten minutes, your trip is ten minutes longer at the beginning, ten minutes longer at the end, and so it’s slower lower.

We came in one morning and the architects had put signs all around the room [saying] “Cheaper deeper.” The next week we came in and the planners had their signs up, “Slower lower.” So that argument -- we kidded about it a lot, but it was a serious argument also, because that was, of

course, one of the fundamental things when you're doing the planning of the mechanical part of the system. How deep do you want to go and for what reasons? When do you want to go aerial structure and so on? But cheaper-deeper, slower-lower I've always used as a kind of phrase for the planners who wanted it to be the easiest possible walk, the pleasantest possible experience, and the engineers who just wanted to get the damn thing there.

Schrag: That's going straight in, you realize. Because the engineers at some point -- they take Weese's original sketch and they said, "You can't possibly fit all the utilities if it's this shallow. You have to have a mezzanine." That seems to have been one of the first battles.

Pfanstiehl: Go to Connecticut and K, 17th and K, that whole area down there. There was -- still is, I guess -- great big septic line running under it. The architects originally wanted to put the station in the middle of the beautiful square in the grass. Wow, that would be beautiful. The planners said, "You do that, and you've got to

make everybody, every single person who comes to the entrance of the station, walk across a street. That slows them down and makes accidents, and it's just not the right place to put it."

In addition, under the street there is this six- or eight-foot sewer line. You've got to go deep enough to go under that. At one time, Libby Rowe of the Planning Commission wanted to put everything under the street. But the sewer -- you couldn't go through the sewer line. You had to go low enough to go through the sewer line. To this day, if you go into that station, Farragut North, you will see at the north end of the station not the continuing of the big arch but a lowered part of the ceiling. That's where the big sewer line goes through. So we had to put it just low enough to get under the sewer line. We made jokes about let's just make the sewer line plastic and we'll have a mobile that will really attract people to watch the diapers go by.

There were practical things like that that came up between planning, planning in the sense that where the

stations should be and where the entrance should be; architecture, the shape of the planning and the shape of the station; and the engineers, who couldn't cut through a sewer line. Or there was talk about making a sewer line a siphon where you have an inverted U, go down and up. But that would have been very difficult to build and brought up other difficulties.

Schrag: What was the tone of this -- how shall I say it? -- negotiation, conflict, battle, whatever between the architects and the engineers? Was there serious professional rivalry or were they just coming from different perspectives and willing to get along?

Pfanstiehl: Yes. [Laughter]. It was both. They came from their worlds. Of course, they did get along finally. I don't recall any people storming out of the offices, I think, because I was not in, didn't have to be in, on those discussions. I would get them over the lunch table later, but I didn't have to be in on the discussions where they would really have a knock-down, drag-out about "do we have to have the escalator this

long" or "why is it on that side of the street." But there were many, I'm sure, very serious arguments. I'm sure some of them were arguments.

But by and large, it was an educational process for both, because gradually the engineers came to have a feeling for what the planners wanted, in the sense of convenience to the patron, and the planners got a feeling for what the engineers could do.

Schrag: To what extent was this happening on the staff level? That is, Lyon's people and Rannells' people? And to what extent was it DeLeuw and Weese?

Pfanstiehl: All of the above. Now, DeLeuw was, of course, much more mechanical, much more traditional engineers. It was Rannells and the staff that had to keep hauling them back into the aesthetics of the thing. Aesthetics -- I don't know if it was a dirty word to DeLeuw, and they would probably deny it today. It wasn't in their vocabulary very much.

Schrag: They wanted to build Toronto again is my impression.

Pfanstiehl: Yes. When the decision was made, I think primarily at the Fine Arts and the Planning Commissions, to have every station the same, basically the same, that was one of the main contentions. As somebody said, “Let’s have eighty stations that are -- of the eighty-six stations, let’s have six that you will get -- you will get six that are just great and seventy-four that are lousy if you’d have different architects for each one.” There was a certain advantage engineering-wise to having the same kind of architecture, because the engineers, the builders, the construction crew, could know how to make an arch and they were repeating it all the way through. So for various reasons, it came out. Of course, the primary reason, as stated by the planners and the Fine Arts and all those, was this is a monumental city and we need a monumental shape to the stations. The arch is a monument.

Schrag: So who was on the side of variety, if anyone?

Pfanstiehl: I think Harry was. It was his concept.

Schrag: Interesting. What I have are these piles of sketches. I'm trying to understand who asked Harry to make them and so forth. He proposed lots of different designs at various points. He had vaults, he had boxes, he had these tapered ceilings.

Pfanstiehl: You name it.

Schrag: He had struts. I don't necessarily have the training to categorize them.

Pfanstiehl: I'm not sure he was proposing that those actually be built. My memory is that they were more "these are the kinds of things we can do" and just to give an idea of the variety of stations. But as everybody understood, a transit station is unlike most other kinds of buildings because you must have a six-hundred-foot-long straight platform. You can't have it on a curve, although a very few of them are. You are constrained, therefore, to a loaf of bread -- a straight, rectangular footprint. After that, what you do for the ceiling is something else. My guess is that those sketches were "if we really want to mix this up, we can do that." But

the Fine Arts Commission said, “No, we’re going to have one kind of system that fits a monumental city,” and that’s what it is.

Schrag: The one person who shows up at the Fine Arts Commission saying, “Let’s make them all different,” is Walter Tobriner.

Pfanstiehl: The eminent architect. [Laughter].

Schrag: And yet, as a District resident, it makes me feel a little bad to see any federal agency say to the representative of the people of the District of Columbia, “Oh, get lost. We’ve decided to make this monumental. Washington, DC exists to serve the federal government.” I don’t know whether that was really a popular voice, because Tobriner wasn’t elected either after all, or whether that was just Tobriner’s own sense.

Pfanstiehl: It was probably more Tobriner’s own. The popular voice didn’t have a hell of a lot to do with the ultimate design decisions in the stations.

Schrag: So you were not -- when you were doing your tours and your community services, you are not showing

people these sketches and saying, “Which do you like?”

Pfanstiehl: No, because that -- when we began to get it tacked down, then we could extol the virtues of the free-standing mezzanines and the visual vistas and all those good things. But, no, I didn’t take out -- definitely didn’t take out various, various plans because -- I guess I must have thought, as many of us thought, that people aren’t architects. People can tell you what they want. “I want to get in the station. I want to get down to the damn train.” But they can’t necessarily say the escalators need to be six feet wide or whatever. Architecture was not a plebiscite.

Schrag: Right. Well, it’s become one. I’m just thinking of the memorial fights and so forth.

Pfanstiehl: Yes. Those are singularities.

Schrag: Okay. I guess my last question about the architecture is do you recall any tension between NCTA and Weese? That is, my sense is that at some point -- well, he gets rejected three times by the Commission of Fine Arts. Also there are

delays in setting up the Washington office. Do you recall any points at which there were real tensions between architect and client?

Pfanstiehl: You mean Weese and us?

Schrag: Yes.

Pfanstiehl: I'm sure there were. The main one that I seem to remember though is that Weese wanted to design the rail plan and go up other streets. He wanted to redesign the city. He was another L'Enfant or fancied himself to be. That was, I'm sure, at least one of any major contentions. One of the differences, of course, was that Weese was not constrained, or didn't think he was, by the governmental bureaucracy structure, Planning Commission, Fine Arts Commission, and all that, and we were. We had to live with those guys. We knew that unless we mollified them and got their blessing that nothing would be built whether Weese proposed it or not. So Harry -- I don't know if he ever really -- I suppose he did -- realized that he just couldn't do whatever he damn well pleased. I'm sure there were many discussions and differences, yes.

Schrag: Okay. Speaking of L'Enfant, it seems that the real L'Enfant in a way is Jackson Graham. We've got a military engineer who had a lot of other interests. That's Pierre L'Enfant and that's Jackson Graham. When do you first meet him? What can you tell me about Jackson Graham?

Pfanstiehl: First of all, you know how Washington was planned. There is a spoof show every year which gives skits of Washington doings for the year. They had this wonderful, hilarious skit many years ago of L'Enfant and his friend in a tavern planning the city. [Mock slurring] They're sitting at a table and they've got a lot of beer mugs around, and they've got a map of the city there. They take their wet beer mugs and they put it down, and L'Enfant says, "We're going to have an intersection here." He puts it down and it makes a circle. He puts it down over here. "We're going to have one over here." So they finally get up and stagger off. The guy lifts up the thing, and there's the plan of Washington with all these circles around, and that's how the circles came to be in Washington. Where were we?

Schrag: Jackson Graham.

Pfanstiehl: When Jackson Graham came into the city, came into our world, some of us were practically ready to resign, because here was the epitome of the highway people, the Army Corps of Engineers who built the goddamned dams where they wanted to.

Pfanstiehl: They were akin to the highway builders who made Chinese walls through the city. I know a number of us would have discussions about that. "I don't know if we can live under the Army Corps of Engineers." When Graham came in, he was friendly and he had sort of a reception, come meet the new boss. As we came through the door, all of the staff, [he said], "How are you, Cody? How's Elliott and Julia?" He knew everybody, and he had done his homework just beautifully. From that moment on, I was his guy, because he had come up, as I later found, through personnel and not through brick, mortar, and construction.

Schrag: I didn't realize that.

Pfanstiehl: I believe if you check back that he was director of personnel or something. He was a people person in the Army Corps of Engineers, if

you can imagine that. He would come up literally and put his arm around you and that sort of thing. He had certain characteristics of my own father, too, so I was a goner for him. But he was the kind of person who would listen and who understood, and he understood people. Boy, did he understand people.

Schrag: Can you tell me some more examples of that, how he showed that skill?

Pfanstiehl: He would go out Sundays and walk the line when it was being constructed. Being an engineer, he knew that his had to be a 6x8 beam over here and all that kind of stuff. Occasionally, we would go out with him, not very often but occasionally. He was just such a genuine, excellent, very knowledgeable technician that you had to admire him for his hands-on. And he, like many good bosses, had a way when something or other would go wrong -- and I don't know that I can think of something -- or even in casual conversation, he would say something [like], "Hey, Cody, you did real well at the so-and-so citizens last night." "Oh, I did?" "Yes.

So-and-so called me." He wouldn't often say that though. He would know things about what we were all doing that we -- "My God, how did he know that?" He was very clever in using those to show that he was on top of things and he knew.

Boy, you never lied to him. I didn't lie to my bosses anyway, but you sure didn't lie to him because he probably knew about it already. I would guess that his exalted rank of general and all that kind of stuff, head of the agency, didn't interfere with him having an honest, ground-level, one-to-one relationship with all of us. I don't recall ever being bawled out by him.

On the other hand, he left an awful lot of my area to me, because as each new general manager would come in, I would say, "Look, you have my resignation just like everybody else. If you want me to resign I will. If you don't, I would ask you that I can put you on the front page every other day if you want just as a flak, as a PR guy. But if you do that, you're going to start getting calls in the middle of the night from people who hear the jackhammers going and the buses failing.

I don’t think you would want to waste your time or energy in that kind of minutiae.” They would say, “No, no. That’s your job.” Of course, he was the same way.

At the same time, he was accessible. He was accessible to us, believe me. And he was accessible -- if I had a big citizen leader or something like that, I could get them connected so they could talk to the super top boss. At the same time, I didn’t bring every Tom, Dick, and Harry in to see him. But he was helpful to the extent that a top boss can be helpful down to certain details when it was necessary. Specifically, except for going through the door into that board room the first time, I don’t know any one thing. Now, I wonder if I wrote up any of that in my journal. I don’t think so. I can’t help you with an anecdote.

Schrag: I imagine that those qualities smoothed what could have otherwise been a difficult transition from federal to WMATA, because most of the staff did stay. Am I correct?

Pfanstiehl: You bet. We were still gung ho-ing. Of course, he started putting in the brown suits. He started hiring a lot of Corps of Engineers engineers who recently retired.

Schrag: There's Dodge. Who else?

Pfanstiehl: Dodge and half his staff. When you talk to Roy just ask him who came from the Corps of Engineers. So much so that Warren Quenstedt, who was an old navy guy, said, "Man, this place is crawling. It's turning up gabardine all the time." One time we all turned up in blue uniforms or something like that. There was a lot of banter about this place is sure turning into the Corps of Engineers. Graham did it for the purpose -- on purpose because these guys were hell of builders. They really know how to build.

Schrag: But you had sort of lost the transit experience that McCarter had. Was there anyone who was a transit person at that point?

Pfanstiehl: Yes. There's a name that I -- ask Bill Herman when you see him. By that time, I guess, we were all kind of transit people because we had been through so much of it. Of course, the boss

was a very quick learner. He also had McCarter to draw from. The plan was pretty well set by his day, so you didn't have to know exactly the configuration of the steel wheel on the steel rail. I'm sure that the general knew that anyway.

Schrag: His first job, of course, was not to -- well, there is this weird break, of course, due to Natcher, one of the many Natcher delays, where Graham comes on, he's ready to build the thing, and then the funds get cut off for a year and a half or so, all of 1968 --

Pfanstiehl: I think it was more than a year and a half.

Schrag: -- and until the end of 1969. Do you remember what was going on in that period? What happens to this agency that has this one reason to exist and can't do it?

Pfanstiehl: Natcher hit the pause button for us. We had a phrase that we constantly said, "Stay alive 'til '85." No, '65. It would have been '65, wouldn't it?

Schrag: No. This was a later Natcher delay. There were a lot. I get them confused.

Pfanstiehl: “Stay alive ‘til ‘75” or whatever it was. We put up signs around it, which means keep doing something, don’t leave, that whole spirit of this too shall pass and we will stay alive until ’75 or whatever it was. So when we start building --

Schrag: Groundbreaking was ’69.

Pfanstiehl: All right. It would have been “stay alive ‘til ‘65” then.

Schrag: That makes perfect [sense], because that would have been after the first bill was defeated. So ’64 was a pretty bad year where you had lost in Congress. Then you get through Congress in ’65. You do stay alive.

Pfanstiehl: So “stay alive ‘til ’65.”

Schrag: Then in 1967 WMATA is formed. In 1968 March you put out this great report with the Airlie-approved system. Then in 1968 Natcher pauses again. This is the second Natcher delay. I don’t quite know what happened. I don’t know that you had anything to do. There are a couple of memos saying, “Well, maybe we should fold up shop,” because you still had expenses. You had to keep people on staff.

Pfanstiehl: And you didn't want to get rid of your staff, because we all didn't want to let go of what we already had. We were too far along. I guess deep down we thought we shall overcome.

Schrag: So you were back in this pause mode again.

Pfanstiehl: Back to the pause mode.

Schrag: When you did break ground, even that seems -- it's hard to find a sort of happy ending at any of these intervals until at least the 1980s. That is, even when you break ground there is still a threat that funding will be cut off. Even after the Three Sisters bridge is canceled, there is still a threat. It's not until early 1980s that there is any sense that the actual hundred-mile system is going to be completed, is my impression.

Pfanstiehl: Anytime you have to come up for refinancing on an annual basis or two years or whatever, you're going to be edgy. Anytime you are dealing with a body politic of a bunch of people who don't live here called Congress, you're going to be edgy. Each time it was a matter of selling

the idea over again or selling the additions to it since last time we saw you folks.

Schrag: Are there any particular milestones that stand out? If you were trying to tell the story of construction, are there specific periods that you would break it down into or does it seem like all one event?

Pfanstiehl: Once we got started, probably sinking the first hole for the first tunnel, because we started in the tunnel part. We didn't do the overhead stuff.

Schrag: Where was that?

Pfanstiehl: We started on Judiciary Square. Incidentally, we went through a corner of one of the municipal buildings there where Warren Quenstedt's wife had her office. We had to take the office because we cut through the corner of the basement. So Warren would say, "My first sacrifice for the system was my wife's office." [Laughter].

Once the construction was started, what can I say? It was going. Now, when we would come to a certain -- as we opened each station, as we

completed each station, there would be celebrations and that sort of thing. When we started the first aerial structure, that was something. But there were many, many turning points, if you will. There were something like eighteen different agencies that had to okay the route by National Airport, including the library that we went near and so forth, and the Federal Highway Administration because we went under an interstate highway. Every time one of those roadblocks would be put aside, that was another mark. But I don't know that there was any great feeling of, "Wow, that was chapter one." It was just a continuous chapter as we went on.

Schrag: At some point soon after groundbreaking, you wrote what turned out to be, I think, a fairly prescient memo saying, "Up until now we've had a free ride. We've been the underdog in the whole freeway fight. Now we've won it and they're going to come after us."

Pfanstiehl: And the troubles start, that's right.

Schrag: So we talked about Yuma Street. We talked about the trees in Takoma. We talked a little bit

about one of these blockages in northeast. Did you just feel swamped by these individual --

Pfanstiehl: No, not swamped, because other things were going all right. You could have a good meeting tonight and a not-so-good meeting the next night. We began getting more sophisticated, more knowledgeable, about what people would say or would like on those things. Going back to the wonderful lady at the Potomac Avenue. When I first started out I don't know that I would have brought the plans so early out to somebody, because plans can change. But in her case I did bring the plans out because my whole thing with her was to say, "Look, we're an open book." And we were. So there were things like that at least I was learning about exposure, if you will. But Graham was very good on having all the charts and stuff for people in the high school auditorium to look at and see and discuss.

It's déjà vu. The other night at the little citizens association here -- the shopping center up there has been sold, and what are they going to do with the streets? Where are they going to put the curbs? Here come the guys from the

planning department, and they've got their easels, and they've got their little green [unclear], and I thought, "Oh, boy," because that was a miniature of what we were going through. But the general managers that we had were always very good about having hearing after hearing after hearing. You saw how many hearings there are.

Schrag: Again, these were more -- as much blowing off steam as actual input that would change anything.

Pfanstiehl: I think, in retrospect, it was primarily blowing off steam and letting people have their say. Maybe I told you, but one of the greatest tributes I ever had was a guy who took a newspaper story, something about "citizens object to station in front yard" or something like that, and the guy had written across it, "Nicest person I ever disagreed with" in big letters. That was what we tried to establish, that we're reasonable. There are certain things we've got to do. Some of them you just have to outlast. Some of them were supported by the local jurisdiction. Montgomery County -- the county

people would say, “Put it here.” The citizens would say, “Put it there.” We would say, “Maybe it ought to go over there.” But the county, of course, had the final word. I’m sure that we were the openest big construction project in the United States anywhere and probably in the world.

Schrag: I can believe that. To what extent was the hostility -- obviously there are worries about any kind of construction, the noise of construction itself, the noise of the trains and the air shafts. What about people worried about having the actual station? You hear the story of Georgetown in particular. What’s your version of that story?

Pfanstiehl: The big thing we had to do when it really began to be real was the general concept that subways are spit, grime, and rape. As I think I told you before, to overcome that we actually took people up to Toronto and showed them a clean subway. My lecture had pictures of nice clean stations in Toronto and even in Japan and places like that. I also had printed up thousands of little fare cards, the same format as they use

today, with a black line which was the magnetic strip. I passed those out. All of them said "free ride on Metro for opening day." This began making it real to people. So the idea of getting away from the popular concept of crime in stations and dirt and that sort of thing was very important.

The television coverage didn't help an awful lot, because some of them would show -- when they say they are going to build a subway in Washington, they would show the New York subway. That didn't do it. I remember when there was a -- they would show pictures of wrecks in other subways and stuff. That didn't help either.

People gradually became aware that you could build a nice clean system. When we built the mockup of half a car and took that around, and we toured -- we had thousands of people go through that mockup. They sat in their seats and they took the picture of Grandma sitting in the seat. Man, that was really it. That did an awful lot to help get over that idea.

But on the other hand, when you would go out and say, "We're going to start digging tomorrow," they would say, "No, you can't do it." We'd say, "Hey, did you turn up at the hearing?" "Well, no, I didn't turn up at the hearing." We had that to fall back on. It didn't assuage very many people. [Laughter]. But it was something that we could say that at least you had your chance to have your say.

Schrag: The tension here, of course, in any kind of big engineering project is the public good versus these local interests. Tocqueville would tell you that there's nothing wrong with NIMBY-ism. For someone to say, "I really would rather not have an air shaft next to my house" -- that's American democracy. But someone else has to say, "Well, this is a transportation system. You can't just put stations where the neighbors would like to have them. They have to be convenient. They have to be evenly spaced."

Pfanstiehl: We would point out, "If you move it from here to here, I'm going to hear from these guys." That rang a bell with many people. No, there was

a great deal of that. Anytime you propose something specific -- the lady in Oklahoma Avenue, again. “Oh, I didn’t realize that it would be right here.” She knew that there would be something coming by, but she didn’t know where. People would rightfully NIMBY us.

Schrag: Would the best result be that clipping saying, “I disagree with you but at least I understand your reasons”?

Pfanstiehl: I like that because it showed that the guy -- he was one of the rational ones. There are a lot of rational people out there, too, believe it or not -- that he understood what we were trying to do, what we had to do.

Schrag: What happened in Georgetown? I understand that NCTA never particularly wanted to put a station there just because it would have been hard to make a tight turn.

Pfanstiehl: It was a couple of things. It was purely an engineering [issue], making a turn. We had to get to Rosslyn. To go through Georgetown, you had to go up, make a left turn and under the river and all that. It would have been difficult

-- not impossible but difficult -- to mine under the river. You would have had to have gone very deep.

But the primary reason was that the District of Columbia was persuaded by the traditional people in Georgetown that we don't want rape, spit, and grime in our place, in our town, our community. There again, we kept coming back to them, saying -- and I rather shamelessly in many cases would say, "Hey, that's not our decision. Go see the District Building." Because it was true that the local jurisdiction, if they really didn't want something, the officials of it could say no. On the board they would vote against it. But the Georgetown was the fact that the establishment of people didn't want to have that kind of thing there. That plus the physical engineering aspects.

Schrag: I'm trying to understand which ended up being more important. Were you trying hard to sell Georgetown on a station?

Pfanstiehl: No. I was doing what the District told us they wanted to do and what we already had on the map.

Schrag: I've never seen a map with Georgetown on it except for one sketch --

Pfanstiehl: I don't think you will.

Schrag: -- from '63 maybe when they were doing all the alternatives.

Pfanstiehl: Maybe a doodle.

Schrag: So in that sense -- so did the District tell you they wanted a Georgetown station at some point?

Pfanstiehl: No.

Schrag: The District didn't want it. The people there didn't want it. The engineers didn't want it.

Pfanstiehl: No. You could see the map, and here was Georgetown, which is a concentration of people and shops, and why don't you go there? Right to this day I still get questions [about that].

Schrag: I'm asking you that question now. [Laughter]. Was there anyone at the time who was saying, "We really think there should be a Georgetown station"?

Pfanstiehl: There probably was. Maybe they were some of the merchants up there. But they were so inconspicuous that it didn't' make a lot of impression on me. I'm sure there was not an organized movement, a "Go to Georgetown Society" with banners waving. There was really, I guess, more of an after -- "Now that it's done, why didn't you do it?"

Schrag: That seems quite plausible. Are there any other obvious places where it doesn't go that people ask you about like that? Certainly the extensions [like] Dulles Airport.

Pfanstiehl: Well, go to Prince George's County where the county and the National Capital Planning Commission opted for four short lines inside the beltway instead of two long lines to Montgomery County. Up to the Green Line, there was discussions about where all those will go. But there is not a line, as you well know, that wasn't discussed at some point, and why don't you go here or there. I guess most every place, "Why don't you go underground here?" was another one.

"Why do you have to be up aerial structure?" and all that.

Schrag: And that did happen in several cases. My understanding is that Bethesda, for example, was originally planned as an aerial structure. They got it buried.

Pfanstiehl: Under Wisconsin Avenue.

Schrag: Do you know how that happened? Was that through public hearings? Did the more powerful players have another way, another door into the agency to, say, go to the Montgomery County Council and through the board?

Pfanstiehl: I would guess that that was -- you mean why are we underground on Wisconsin Avenue?

Schrag: Yes.

Pfanstiehl: It would have blighted that whole Wisconsin Avenue corridor to have a Chicago elevated running along there. To my memory, everybody just agreed on that, that it was not something that you ever want to do. There were plans for a monorail in northern Virginia, but it wasn't a practical thing to do, for engineering reasons too. So I guess we all just took for granted

that the only way to go up a heavy corridor like Wisconsin Avenue was underground. You just couldn't put an elevated structure over Wisconsin Avenue aesthetically. Also the approach -- you would have to have stairs leading up and all kinds of crazy things. I don't recall anybody really saying seriously, "Go elevated on Wisconsin Avenue."

Schrag: That's what Stolzenbach said.

Pfanstiehl: All right.

Schrag: Again, we've talked about his musical ear, so to speak. [Laughter].

Pfanstiehl: Tin ear.

Schrag: Exactly. He may not have been as sensitive to what people were saying to him.

Pfanstiehl: No. In his zeal and in the early day, he too was learning about the cans and can'ts of rapid transit engineering. I didn't realize -- did he really say that it should be elevated?

Schrag: That was in the '62 plan. And later, in a later tape, what he says is what he really wanted was something under a billion dollars.

Pfanstiehl: All right. If he's doing it for cost --

Schrag: Right. That when he went to Congress in 1962, he wanted an eight-digit figure not a nine-digit figure. That was all the difference in the world. If that meant putting things elevated --

Pfanstiehl: Yes. I'll bet you that in his heart of hearts, and in the middle of the night, he knew that if he could get at least that through then later you could modify it and put it in.

Schrag: That seems to be standard.

Pfanstiehl: I think it was a ploy. And it's still used in all kinds of public works projects.

Schrag: The whole Great Society was passed that way, if I understand it. Okay. We've been going for quite a while. Maybe we can wrap up this session with opening day, how that affected people in the agency, how that affected WMATA's image when you actually -- it's 1976, the bicentennial, and you can actually run a train. Did this redeem the agency?

Pfanstiehl: Unalloyed joy. It redeemed the agency to the extent that -- by that time, don't forget, there were a lot of people who really wanted it.

They had pored over the maps. They said, “I live here, and I can get to work there, and oh, boy, this is going to be great.” So there was already a great deal of support for it. I’m quite sure that by opening day the whole highway versus thing was pretty well over. The map had been okayed and we were going to have trains running and so on. So it was just, “My God, we’ve got this thing done.” We had our opening ceremonies up at Rhode Island Avenue station, everybody sitting in the parking lot there.

Kay Graham was there sitting in the front row. She and I had been at the University of Chicago together when we were students. While I didn’t know her, she undoubtedly knew about me. I don’t recall meeting her, but I probably did because she was fairly prominent. Anyway, we had that connection. So in my exuberance, when the guests all got seated, and she was right in the front row, I went over in front of her and I went down and did obeisance to her and then went up and hugged her. I recall the Post photographer -- I don’t know if he ever got his shot of it -- but

they were aghast. The reporters told me afterwards, “Cody, you did that to Kay Graham?”

But everybody was happy -- I mean, really happy. The first train that went up there in the snowstorm, everybody started singing -- the people on the train started singing, “We’ve been working on the railroad.” The road below Rhode Island Avenue was pretty well clogged in the snow. They would look down and [laugh], “Ha, ha!” and thumb their noses at them.

We had the problem, of course, that some of the trains stalled, because there were so many people that it bowed down the floor of the train just enough to make the tracks for the doors stick. Later we of course strengthened that. But we had more people than we ever expected -- all of those guys with free tickets to ride Metro on opening day. It was free. So we had that glitch, and we took our raps in the paper. “The world’s greatest system opened today,” or whatever they were saying, “but the doors jammed.” I was quick, of course, to say, “The doors jammed because there

were so many people in it trying to get on." I don't recall any misgivings on that day at all.

Schrag: And that first leg -- one story I've heard; I don't know if this is right -- is that that first leg actually served an important function in that it got people from the Senate office buildings to K Street for lunch and back in the middle of the day. And this solidified any Congressional support that you needed, that all the lobbyists and staffers could zip back and forth across town.

Pfanstiehl: That would be true, but you also, when you're building something like this which is a network, you have to start at the middle. I recall discussions saying, "Why don't we start way out in the counties where it's cheaper to build and move towards the city?" We said, "No way. There's going to be construction up there for years. Not a soul will be able to ride it. Where can we start where we get the quickest people on the trains?" Of course, that's downtown. It's that segment in there.

There was a lot of talk, and still occasionally is, of a station under the plaza at the Capitol and a visitor's center with plans drawn up for that. Maybe someday they'll do that.

Schrag: I understand the architect of the Capitol killed that.

Pfanstiehl: He killed that very quickly. He wasn't going to have any of that stuff running under his front yard.

Schrag: And the National Park Service killed the Taft Bridge idea.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes, underneath the --

Schrag: Yes. It seems that it's not easy to --

Pfanstiehl: When you deal with those big federal agencies, you just can't ride roughshod over them. Going under Lafayette Square, we had to go very shallow because we were coming from under the Treasury Building steps. Mrs. Johnson, looking out her window, didn't want to see cut and cover. She didn't want to see construction there. So we would have -- we told all the agencies, "Look, if we can do cut and cover through Lafayette Square, we will save an awful

lot of money," because it was so shallow, thirty-five feet. But, no. Mrs. Johnson -- the story we had was when she looks out from the White House window she didn't want to see all of Lafayette Square torn up, which I'm sure it would have been.

So we went underneath very carefully with out little mole. It got stuck in the middle. We had to pull it out both ends. To this day there is a shield underneath there where it got stuck. They built a station inside it, because you always build your tunnel bigger so that you can put the station walls in. And the statue of -- who is it in the southeast corner? Wherever that is, the guy on horseback. Lafayette maybe himself.

Schrag: Lafayette is standing up in the southeast corner. Horseback is Andrew Jackson in the middle.

Pfanstiehl: One of those statues is off a half inch because we had a little subsidence. But that was a very delicate operation. Happily, Mrs. Johnson couldn't see the rest of the system. [Laughter]. That story may be apocryphal, but I don't think it was. She probably said almost casually

sometime to somebody, and then they took it. But I don't blame the Park Service and the others for not wanting it to be torn up. Of course, later they closed off the street and put up the barricades and did all that kind of stuff. [Laughter].

Schrag: Okay. Unless there is anything else pre-opening that I should have asked about, we can call this a day.

Pfanstiehl: I'll probably think of it in the middle of the night, and I'll write it down and call you and let you know.

Schrag: Okay. I'm going to stop the tape now.

[End of Session].

Session 3

20 September 2000

Schrag: Zachary Schrag is interviewing Mr. Cody Pfanstiehl. It is the 20th of September, 2000, at two-thirty in the afternoon. We are at his home in Silver Spring, Maryland, and this is out third interview session.

I said I have some follow-up questions from our previous sessions. We were talking off the tape that you estimated that all in all you gave sixty-five thousand people tours of Metro stations.

Pfanstiehl: Yes, either individually or in groups of twenty, thirty people, because we would clump them together for those tours, particularly during the construction period. I wanted people to have a feeling that they were part of this. I encouraged them to pick up a stone and carry it home to the kids. This was the same principle we used when we got closer to operations and we began handing out printed fare cards. It had a brown stripe on it, but it wasn’t magnetic. We handed out thousands of those things, and it said

"Free ride on opening day." "I have a fare card, wow!" It was the idea to make people feel that A) it was real, and B) that they really had a part of it, they were there.

Schrag: You did all the stuff -- the fare cards, the tours, the car on the White House lawn, the touring car. It brings up an important question, which is how closely related are you to Buffalo Bill?

Pfanstiehl: My mother said that it was third cousin once removed. The Cody family is a very extensive organization. They market that name like crazy. There is no doubt that there is a relationship there. There is a whole flock of Codys in Florida and, of course, Cody, Wyoming. As a matter of fact, when I was a lad in my early teens, we drove out through there. My younger brother, Alfred, after we had driven through the town of Cody, Wyoming, and there was a Cody Shoe Shop and a Cody Restaurant a Cody Dry Goods Store and stuff, burst into tears and said, "There is nothing named Alfred here." [Laughter]. But,

yes, there is a distinct and distant relationship.

Schrag: But the showmanship gene seems to have traveled quite well from him to you.

Pfanstiehl: Well, I don't know that the DNA was that direct. As a high school student I was very active in the stage shows and vaudeville acts and stuff like that. As a matter of fact, I played on Saturday nights for a while at the local Alcyon Theater in Highland Park on the stage when the local town theaters had stage shows. I always have liked to perform, an egotistical thing, I guess. In the symphony orchestra I was up sometimes in the first chair where you're right in front of the audience.

Schrag: On violin?

Pfanstiehl: Yes. We gave a concert. It was a big symphony orchestra, one of the biggest on the north shore, as a matter of fact. We went up to Lake Forest College to give a concert one time. At the start of, I think, the Phaedra Overture. Overture to Phaedra, there is a down-bow stroke on the violin -- boom! I gave a down-bow stroke,

and my bow went shooting out in the audience. [Laughter]. But, yes. I used to write skits for the student stunts and the vaudeville thing and that sort of thing. Later on that continued.

At one time I wanted to be an actor. My stepfather got me a job out in San Diego at the World's Fair of San Diego at the then famous Shakespeare Theater [with] Thomas Wood Stevens, who is one of the gurus of Shakespeare. I went out there that summer thinking maybe I wanted to be an actor. I didn't get paid, but I was an extra. I came running on saying, "Burn the house of Caesar! Burn the house of Caesar!" I had my pantaloons and whatnot. Then I would go out the stage door and about a hundred feet away into the English tavern which was next door and start cutting up kidneys for the kidney pie, because I had to earn a little something. I got my meals that way. I played the violin in one of the scenes where they needed a trio in the balcony for the Morris dancers or whatever it was.

But I didn't -- I got disabused of being an actor professionally by being with actors who were

pretty cut-throat people. There was a guy named Bert Tanswell who played the clown in a lot of these things. He would take a carrot with the leaves and stuff on it, hook it in his belt, and dance around. If you can visualize what that would look like. I also had charge of some of the props. When the show was -- we gave six, at least six, forty-five-minute plays a day, obviously cut down. It was just from the Midsummer's Night Dream the Piramus and Thisbe thing. I would take people on tours of the theater when they would come up afterwards. Inevitably the kids would say, "Hey, can you show us the blood on the sword where he stabbed him?" That theatrical experience pretty well killed the idea of being an actor as such.

However, at the University of Chicago in college, I did continue with my violin talking act. I was college of master of ceremonies at the Blackhawk Nightclub in Chicago for a number of nights. They would get college students there to be master of ceremonies so they could get the other college students to come. Then at the very swanky Edgewater Beach Hotel, in the great big

ballroom, and I used to tell this violin story, which I have since told a hundred times to blind kids and everything else. After one night -- I would stand in the middle of that big ballroom, people seated at tables all around the edges. But I would go up and I would reach out with my bow and sort of touch them as part of the act, until one guy grabbed the end of the bow and pulled it over toward a candle on the table. I didn't think that was a very good idea. But, yes, I continued making public appearances.

In the sense of going out and talking to people, to this day it continues. I enjoyed the egotism of being the head guy and observing and being part of the give and take of a presenter and the people being presented to, where you watch their eyes and see how you're doing. That's always been true. Plus a lack of embarrassment of getting up. That never phased me. I would sometimes go into a crowded room where I needed the attention of people. If the emcee was saying quietly into the microphone, "Folks, if you'll quiet down a little bit," I would just walk up and say, "Ladies and

Gentlemen!" and take over in that sense. So there was somewhat of the fearlessness.

Neither my mother, who was a very brilliant woman -- got her big honors at the University of Chicago -- nor my father, whom I think I've mentioned was generally acclaimed to be a scientific genius in the North Shore, were public people. So it didn't come from there. I don't know where it came from. I can ask the DNA people to find the chromosome.

Schrag: But that was definitely -- there was a continuity there between your going up before a crowd of people at the unfinished station.

Pfanstiehl: Absolutely. After all, I had the biggest show in town. It was great.

Schrag: I know that your official title was Director of Community Services.

Pfanstiehl: I chose that rather than "public information." When I was hired, Darwin Stolzenbach said they wanted a director of public relations, which was the jargon in those days. I said, "No, I don't want to be public information. I want to be information for all kinds of

information." So I chose the community services, which to my mind was really what it was all about, because I was also a conduit. I would bring back from the audiences to the engineers ideas, kooky or not, and be a two-way thing. The feeling of community service also was what Metro was all about. It was a huge community service project.

Schrag: How would you describe yourself in those days in terms of -- I'm trying to figure out how to -- I can't say "architect Cody Pfanstiehl" or "engineer Cody Pfanstiehl." Is there a shorter way to say that?

Pfanstiehl: Good question. Public relations is true, except that public relations -- those words semantically have a bad pitch these days, or always had I guess. I really don't know. [Laughter]. I never came up with anything else. It was also media relations, which was all part of public relations. I don't think I have a better word for it. Maybe we'll think of one as we talk.

Schrag: I had mentioned over the phone, I guess, that when I was in Chicago I was reading Weese's file on handicapped access. One of the things that's very interesting about this is that it was right at the time when neither the architectural profession nor policy-makers, specifically Congress, knew exactly how far to go. As far as I can tell, there was no thought when the New York subway was built --

Pfanstiehl: There was not. That was a sign of the times. The ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] was just a dream really. And the handicapped community, if you can call it that -- handicapped people were not militant. Citizens hadn't learned how to be militant in a lot of things, except the race relations and the Southern marchers and things like that. But the handicapped were very slow, and they were not united, so that there wasn't one center of action and planning as there was in so much of the civil rights movement. They were splintered. The people with wheelchairs would like to have one thing, the people who are deaf wanted another, the blind another. So in architects, in

engineers, in the general public, and particularly in Congress and in the legal profession, the concept, the recognition, had not yet grown.

I had a -- I was, in a sense, lucky because I had worked at this camp for children with behavior problems. Later I told my violin story for blind kids at a summer camp. I was perhaps more aware of the need, but I had no idea of any kind of a mass movement or bringing legal pressure or social pressure. It just wasn't a part of the lexicon and belief system of society at that time.

Schrag: When were these experiences with the camp and the blind kids? Is that before Metro?

Pfanstiehl: Yes. The blind kids -- you can make a list of these dates and I can look up some of it. They were in my high school days. My first wife was an excellent pianist and one of the best accompanists around. Of course, we used to play violin sonatas at home. As I say, during the college years, really into late high school, I had developed this technique of telling a violin story where the violin talks -- [demonstrates].

That was just what you needed for blind kids, of course.

I had, of course, worked in a settlement house in Chicago on North Avenue, Association House, which incidentally is still there [and] celebrated its hundredth anniversary. While the house was not specifically for handicapped, it was for kids who were, in a sense, socially handicapped. I was hired there by a wonderful woman named Mrs. Eleanor Eels, who was the founder of Association House. She had this then somewhat radical idea that you ought to have a summer recreation camp for children from what we then called the slums, but not abandon them at the end of their two weeks or a month and throw them back in the slums, that you would follow up with it. Of course, since she was running this social settlement, she could have a specific group of children who would be out at the camp. When they came back, the social workers could follow them up. That appealed to me greatly. She had heard about me through my aunt, Helen Cody Baker, who was a writer and a columnist once a week in the Chicago Daily News. She wrote a column on social

welfare stuff. So Mrs. Eels hired me as the counselor.

That was some of the greatest life experiences you can have. Some of those children from Chicago from the near north side or from all over Chicago, we would take them out. The first night they arrived in camp to what we called the battlefield, which was just a big cleared field -- this was out in the far suburbs of Chicago -- the kids would look up and see stars for the first time in their life. If you've been brought up on a city street where there are lights from the stores and lights from the streetlights and that sort of thing, if you look up you don't see the stars anyway, and you never think to look up. They would look up and see the stars, and they would burst into tears at the wonder of it, which was a great thing. [Laughter].

But there I used to put on impromptu shows. As a matter of fact, I wrote what we called a "mellerdrama." The counselors had to put on a show every Thursday night or something, and we had to have entertainment. We had a guy, Art Bell, who was a

great guitarist [and] a guy named Tom, who also played the guitar. We would put on these impromptu shows as counselors in summer camps have done and do for time immemorial. I wrote this “mellerdrama,” which has to do with the poor widow in her house. The mortgage is coming due, and the landlord comes to the door. He goes in and say, “You will pay.” “No, I can’t. I don’t have the money.” He puts the box of dynamite in the middle of the room, and he lights a candle on it. “You will pay or the candle will burn down.” Well, at the end the hero crashes through the door and saves the day -- pure hokum. But it was such pure hokum that it made good theater, particularly for kids. It’s the equivalent today, of course, of what we see on television, in a way. But that “mellerdrama” I kept, and we used it in the PTA when I got here to Washington, and other PTAs got copies of it. It’s still floating around out there somewhere. But that was all part of this theatrical experience.

Anyway, the kids from Chicago were not handicapped in a physical sense. Probably we had some lame people, but it was handicapped socially. So I

guess I got a feeling for helping out, if you will, working in a settlement house and all, from my parents, who were socially minded, although I was born in a pretty rich family. The mansion at 614 Woodpath Avenue, Highland Park, Illinois was quite an extensive house. Then in the Depression it hit the business and we had to move to a smaller house next door and so on. But my parents were social minded and brought me up to have a feeling for the other guy.

Schrag: Interesting, because around 1966, from the documents you seem to have been a loud voice within the agency saying, “It’s not enough to serve the average commuter. We need to think about people with physical disabilities, children, the elderly, others who might have more trouble using the system than the typical office worker.”

Pfanstiehl: That’s true. This was the extension of what I’ve just been telling you about from a settlement house in Chicago all the way up.

Schrag: Did you find that other people -- the engineers, the consultants -- resisted this idea?

Pfanstiehl: Sure. Anybody resists something that is new and makes them change their ways. There were -- eventually the law had to come in with the ADA and, if you will, make them change. An engineer is not taught in college -- maybe they do it a little bit now -- to be people friendly. They are slide rule people. And I'm drawing the bad picture of them. Larry Heflin is not. They're taught to be hard metal people instead of behavioral, social people.

Of course, way back then all I could do would be to, in the planning sessions, try to remind them that there are such things as blind people or lame people or whatever. That was why, when they decided to go escalators, I was overjoyed. The whole idea of serving everybody seemed to me what a transit system had to be.

Schrag: Did you have any allies within the agency on that issue?

Pfanstiehl: The staff, my own staff, were kindly people, I guess you would say. I don't recall specifically. Probably there were, but I don't recall that I would get together at lunch and

say, “Now here is what we’ve got to do tomorrow and force this.” No, it was more a personal reminder at planning meetings and things like that.

Schrag: So you’d come up to -- I guess the chief opponents that I’ve come across were Mel Siegel in the architecture department saying, “If you put a wheelchair in, it’s going to mess up the circulation.”

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes.

Schrag: He was quite adamant on that?

Pfanstiehl: You bet. The architects would have none of it, because that would change their pristine view of how you just look at healthy people striding through the corridors. We had a continuing discussion on the illumination. I believe at one time the architects said that the illumination in the station should be halfway between the light on the outside and total darkness, which maybe mathematically sounds fine. I used to try to get them to put more light in the stations.

Schrag: For people with visual impairments?

Pfanstiehl: For everybody and, of course, with visual impairment. I was not at the time focused on the visual impairment like I am now, being married to a visually impaired woman. There was constant nudging.

Schrag: We talked before about Graham's famous Dulles Airport experiment. He was so stubborn on this issue, for reasons I can't -- it seems even after the federal government said it would pick up eighty percent of the cost of the elevators, he still resisted.

Pfanstiehl: I think -- he's Army Engineer Corps. Let me take a sidetrack. Maybe I've told you this. When he was first appointed and we heard that an army engineer general was coming in to take over, some of us practically wrote out our resignation right there, because even in those days the army engineers had this "damn the torpedoes, let's go ahead and build the dam thing." But he had a kind of reception very shortly after he got there up in the board room, and one by one we came through and shook his hand. When he came to me, and I'm sure it was true of the others, "How are

you, Cody? How's Margaret? Are you doing all right?" That man had done his homework, and in three minutes I was hooked, because he had come up through the engineers in personnel. He was looking out for people, yes, but I don't know. Maybe psychologically he was still [thinking], "If you've got a plan, you God damn stick to it." Of course, he was still struggling the budget battle, and to put all this extra money in there -- wow.

Schrag: The way I'm trying to work this wheelchair issue into the bigger story is it seems that in the early 1970s you had succeeded in persuading the people of Washington that they owned the system. They turned around and said, "Okay, if we own it, here is what we want." One of the things you have are people in wheelchairs demanding access. Another significant debate is over the bus takeover and how that should work. Then the third one I have in that section is minority employment and Metro's responsibility to the unemployed. So if we could take those second two, the bus takeover seems like it must have been a community services disaster. Instead of

selling this pristine train of the future, you've got these decrepit, rusting buses of the past with your name on them.

Pfanstiehl: That's exactly right. The idea of running a bus system was anathema to Graham and to all of our rail-oriented guys and the architects and everybody else. My God, why this? At the same time, there was a feeling, I'm sure, that it's inevitable. It had to be. It just made plain everyday sense. There was a lot of politics that went on behind it that I wasn't that closely related to. But I think, as I recall, and maybe my memory is very selective at this point, that when we found that it was going to happen, we said, "All right, we'll do the best we can." And that kneeling buses, if you got into that, a bus that lowers itself so that handicapped can get in, and the ramps and stuff like that -- I think that came fairly late in the game. Obviously you didn't do that the day you took over the bus system.

Schrag: But when you do take over and it's your job to convince the city that things will get better on

the buses, do you remember any particular steps you took to try to improve their public image? Everyone who has said the word O. Roy Chalk to me calls him “the infamous O. Roy Chalk.” This was a villain out of your melodrama.

Pfanstiehl: He was a hell of a businessman. He owned an airline and stuff like that. Sure. He was [the man] the people loved to hate, the man that people loved to hate.

Schrag: So you get his buses, and suddenly people start associating WMATA with this villain, in a way. There is some public hearing when someone says, “You’ve just become another O. Roy Chalk” over fares and so forth. I guess one thing that interests me is that there is this decision -- I don’t know whose it was -- to name the things Metrobus.

Pfanstiehl: That would be Graham probably.

Schrag: To unite it. I mean, that’s sort of a dangerous [unclear].

Pfanstiehl: Metro had a good image, we thought. So if you name it Metrobus, hopefully it rubs off on it. But then you’ve got to deliver the goods.

Schrag: Exactly. Then if anything goes wrong with the buses, it rubs off the other way onto Metro.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes. That's right. But if it's going to be inevitable, if that's the recipe that was handed to you, that's the way it's going to be. I think it was a fine idea to name it Metrobus.

Schrag: Do you remember who came up with the idea of then changing the rail system to Metrorail? Was that around the same time?

Pfanstiehl: At first, I was one of the ones who wanted to call it the Rapid -- just period, the Rapid -- because speed was the big thing. But that didn't fly. We wanted to get the idea of rail to separate it from other modes. No, I don't recall specifically who. Again, Graham was extremely influential in the nomenclature and stuff like that.

Schrag: Do you remember any other proposals for system names? I assume this was before it was ever called Metro at all.

Pfanstiehl: Yes. Or we were WMATA and NCTA before that.

Schrag: Right. But the idea that the --

Pfanstiehl: Well, “the subway.” But we all, and I’m sure I was included in that, did not want to call it “the subway,” because we would thus inherit the New York feeling about a subway, which is spit, grime, and rape. No way would we want to do that, so we stayed away. “Underground?” It was not an “elevated;” it was an aerial structure. We were careful about the semantics.

Schrag: The other name question I have is, if you go to the three downtown stations, as you leave there is a sign saying “Thank you for riding Metro, America’s subway.” Do you remember the origins of that slogan?

Pfanstiehl: No. I have no idea. I don’t even remember seeing the sign. Where is it?

Schrag: L’Enfant [Plaza], Gallery [Place], and Metro Center, the three big transfers.

Pfanstiehl: I’ll bet you those are fairly late additions. You could check that with the architecture. They could tell you.

Schrag: I’ll try to find out about that.

Pfanstiehl: Although, of course, “America’s subway” was what President Johnson said in his message to us,

which we wrote for him. The idea that -- and that was one way we got the funds, that this was not just a city subway but this was for all America, which indeed you can say it was.

Schrag: Interesting. Was that the one directing the agency to seek out the best?

Pfanstiehl: That’s right. We slaved over that one. That’s the way things are done in Washington.

Schrag: I found a draft that seemed to be -- was it Kent Cooper who might have done an early draft of that?

Pfanstiehl: Yes. Sure. There was a lot of input into it from everybody.

Schrag: Yes, it’s a key document.

Pfanstiehl: And you’ve got a good hunk on Charlie Horsky, I assume. He was very influential in the early days.

Schrag: Yes. Some of his correspondence is down here. I was at the Kennedy library and got some of his files from there. A lot of his papers are in the Johnson library and not completely open. But he shows up a lot and certainly was a big --

Pfanstiehl: He was very, very important.

Schrag: It's interesting how he was sort of very close to the anti-highway people for a long time, but then they wanted NCTA to remain federal or go to a federal corporation. Horsky was saying, "No, we've got to make this an interstate compact." So that's where they split.

Pfanstiehl: Well, Horsky knew that you had to get the cooperation and the input. You had to get the fingers in the pie, the fingers of the county into the pie and the two states.

Schrag: So then the third challenge of the early 70s, as I see it, is this issue of minority hiring, where at one point the DC representatives on WMATA board -- this is 1974 -- actually stop the contracts. They exercise their jurisdictional veto.

Pfanstiehl: This was happening all over the United States, and of course it was happening here because this is a flagship city. The legal guys were in there, the labor people.

Schrag: Did you have any --

Pfanstiehl: I had very little input on the whole labor situation, because that's the lawyers.

Schrag: You had earlier described your role of sort of getting the feedback from the audience. I know that at some point you were going into Shaw and their planning meetings. We talked before about Oklahoma Avenue. Did you have any responsibilities to go out on the labor question?

Pfanstiehl: Not specifically on the labor question, no, because a lot of that was done in the board rooms and in the lawyers' offices, but it was simply part of the package that would come up. If somebody -- and I don't really recall anybody who stood up and raised hell in the audience. If they did, then there were probably some suggestions or remarks. I would say, "No, we believe that everybody should have a job." I would say God-and-motherhood stuff.

Schrag: So in some ways your role there was to dampen down --

Pfanstiehl: Well, not even dampen down. In the part of the world that I was operating in, it didn't come up that often. If somebody really was raging on

the floor, yes, I would try to mollify them, as I would somebody hollering about anything.

Schrag: So sort of the same thing that I guess would also be true of the G Street merchants who had their streets torn up.

Pfanstiehl: Yes, that's right. I told you about the jeweler. Upstairs -- I'll show you before you leave -- you'll find a chalice, a kind of a bowl. I'll think of his name in a minute. He had two or three jewelry stores downtown, one of them on either F or G Street. We dug it up in front of his [store], ruined his sidewalk, knocked off his patrons, blah, blah, blah. He moved over to Connecticut Avenue. So when we came to build the Connecticut Avenue station, we dug it up in front of him. It didn't do him any good. He had been a personal friend -- not close but a personal friend that I had known outside of the business world. He was just madder than hell. Why can't I think of him?

I suggested, "Now, look, we're just a couple of months from the groundbreaking. Why don't you get yourself a load of the earth from the groundbreaking and

make it into a vase or an object that you can sell as a very historic souvenir of the groundbreaking for the biggest project in the world?" And he did. He put little silver words on the thing, and he sold them. He didn't make a lot of money, but he made a lot of publicity because I helped him. I would tip off reporters that he was going to have this in his window tomorrow morning, and they would take a picture of it. It made him fairly happy. It didn't help his balance sheet all that. It was things like that that I could do.

I suggested to some -- I don't think anybody really did it. Oh, I know. I suggested to a bunch of merchants on G Street or Connecticut Avenue that they put a television set in their window and hook it up to a closed-circuit camera down in the tunnel below so the people could stand in front. Instead of peeping through the fence, they could see this. I was just about to go with that kind of thing when the insurance people came and said, "No, we don't do that." Because had something happened in the tunnel, there would have been TV evidence and all that kind of stuff. But there were

things like that that I could do to help the people.

There was a guy who was on I Street down there near our headquarters who ran one of the famous picture framing shops. When we dug up -- boy, we really dug up the street in front of his place. I suggested to him that there will come a day when that street is back and it's going to be a better street than you've got now. "Why don't you have a dinner with a white table cloth and everything on the street to celebrate the opening of the street?" I'm quite sure he did that. There was -- what was down there by the temperance statue? I'll try to think of that. There's a place down on Pennsylvania Avenue where there is a temperance statue. I guess we were digging around there. I suggested the same kind of thing where they have a very posh cocktail party or something right on the sidewalk where everybody could see. I think I told you about the bears and the union on I Street. Stop me if you haven't heard this.

Schrag: Go ahead.

Pfanstiehl: They're digging up I Street up there by K Street. It's been dug up. Now they're resurfacing it. They're getting to the point where they're putting on the final layer of asphalt to really complete it so they can open up for the automobiles. That I very much wanted to dramatize, because the merchants were dying and hollering, as they ought to do. So I had for several years done cross-promotions with Ringling Brothers/Barnum & Bailey Circus. Their press agent was now a friend of mine. Every time he'd come to the city he'd call, "Cody, what are we going to do this year?" He had some performing bears. So I suggested that the bears come over and remove the barricades so the first automobiles could go across the street, which he did. The next day our lawyers heard from the union people. "What do you mean he got bears on the street where there should have been workers?" But it did get publicity to show people that it had been completed.

Schrag: That was fantastic.

Pfanstiehl: At one point, they in the circus -- maybe they still do -- have these little automobiles that ten clowns get into. What did I do? I had ten people dressed in Metro costumes or something. Anyway, we used that kind of thing. Those were fun, the tie-ups like that. I was also, back from my Warner Brothers days, the idea of a publicity tie-up, where it's a win-win situation. I get publicity for my product, you get publicity for your product or service. It was always a good place -- it still is today. It's done all the time.

Schrag: At this point you just had buses, so "take the buses to the circus"?

Pfanstiehl: No. I've forgotten the details of it, but it was something where we got Metro very much in the center ring. Maybe it was a little Metrobus or something. I don't know, but there was that basic idea of you win and I win and we both do it together. Those were fun.

Schrag: Why don't we get this thing open, or at least part of it, [unclear] where we ended up the last

session. How did it change your job to have actual paying passengers for the first time?

Pfanstiehl: I could get out and mix with the people on the trains, that story of the history of Tiber Creek. I could take people on special rides to go in the open stations and that sort of thing. So I had something that was not just a dream and a promise; I had something that was real. They could get in it. Any number of people, of course, came up that first day with their little fare cards. Hey, I've got a free ride. Yes, everybody gets a free ride. A lot of them came up and said, "Yes, I remember being on your mock-up car on the beltway and at the shopping centers." It was now real, and I was so proud to be on those trains. In those days, I knew a lot of the train operators. I would be standing on the platform and the train would come in. The guy would stick his head out the window, "Hi, Cody." That was greatly ego satisfying, too. You stand around the platform, people, some of them, would recognize me and you could talk about things. It's all the difference in the world when you have an operating system.

Of course, the downside is when there were train delays and you had to explain that. But even then we tried to get the operators to explain what it was -- the train operator. But the transit personnel really didn't want to admit that something was wrong. They were not the talkative people. There was always that difference in there. I would say, "Come on, tell them about it." When I would call up central control when there was some kind of a bollix up or something like that, it was difficult to get them to really level with me. That's true of any PR guy in any organization. The last thing the treasurer wants to say is, "Yes, I goofed up, so you can explain it to the public what it was." That's always true, and it was certainly true at Metro.

As I became a senior citizen around Metro -- that is, somebody who had been there for a long time and knew a good deal about the working of it -- it became easier because I would say, "Wait a minute. We had this last month on the framace [phonetic] with the switchbox and blah, blah, blah." They would know that I knew enough that

they had better tell me. But there's always that problem of getting the real truth out.

Schrag: You were NCTA hire number twelve or something, so you had --

Pfanstiehl: I was number three or four.

Schrag: Three or four. At least under Kennedy's administration, I guess there were a half dozen people more --

Pfanstiehl: Further project, yes.

Schrag: -- than Eisenhower. But then, I guess, as the thing got more complex, you had lost some of your relative expertise. Would that be fair?

Pfanstiehl: Well, it got so complicated that I couldn't know everything. Oh, yes. Those very first days when there were five or six of us sitting around a table up there on the square in front of the White House, Judiciary Square, we could all of us know at the end of the day exactly what progress had been made everywhere -- the planner, [et cetera]. I could sit in on those meetings and, boy, I had a grasp of the situation. But as things got more and more complicated, of course that wasn't possible, so I had to scrounge around

a little bit. I tried, as we got into operations, to put one of my staff down in the central control, but they really didn't like to have a guy sitting over their shoulder, because they saw that person as the public sitting there. They thought every move they made he would call up and tell the newspaper, "Hey, Washington Post." It was really not a welcome thing. I don't think that lasted very long. [Laughter].

Schrag: So what did that have -- because this does have a lot to do with -- as you said, these tensions are still here with WMATA. That is, particularly as the system ages and it needs more maintenance, there are some really tough press problems.

Pfanstiehl: Have you talked with Ray Feldman?

Schrag: I have not. But I've seen some Washington Post stories that are based entirely on the Freedom of Information Act requirements. It doesn't seem that in your day it would have taken a Freedom of Information Act request to get something.

Pfanstiehl: Did we have the Freedom of Information Act even in those days? I'm not sure.

Schrag: No, I guess that was later.

Pfanstiehl: It wasn’t being used like it is today.

Schrag: The point is, as you said, you came in with the idea that there was no distinction between public and private information. These days there is a strong distinction.

Pfanstiehl: And actually, in those days there was some. The congressional liaison people wouldn’t sit down and say, “Here are our tactics to win over this congressman. We’re going to have Joe talk to Pete.” But there wasn’t the kind of fierce battles of FOI Act that we have today.

Schrag: Was there a particular time when the agency began to get a little more publicity shy?

Pfanstiehl: I don’t know that there was. Everything is gradual. It eases into it. In a sense, with Stolzenbach it was publicity shy, because he sure didn’t want to tip his hand when things were this and that with Congress and that sort of thing. So there was always some of that in some parts of it. You wouldn’t go out and say, “Tomorrow we’re going to have a very crucial meeting with Montgomery County” so that the newspapers would be out there sitting in it. So there was always

that, and I'm sure there is still today. It's a gradual process. As you get more and more complicated and you touch more lives and you have more miles and tentacles reaching out, it gets more complicated.

Schrag: So you mentioned you were riding the system frequently. Were you able to -- when was the first time you were able to use the system to actually get somewhere that you needed to go. Obviously, it starts off at 4.6 miles.

Pfanstiehl: I didn't use it to commute really until it got to Silver Spring, and that was, of course, quite a way along the line. Also, I wanted my car. I had to have my car because in the middle of the day I would sometimes have to whiz out someplace, particularly at night, to go to these many, many, many evening meetings. So it was quite a while before I took it regularly. I guess I never really took it regularly because I always wanted my little car. I had one of the first what today we call cell phones and my little Volkswagen. It didn't fit my lifestyle.

Schrag: But you would take the system then primarily to get a sense of what was going on.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, sure, and I just loved to ride it, particularly when there were new stations. I would go out and kind of case the neighborhood. What kind of stores are out here and that sort of thing, just sit around in the stations and watch people and hear them talk. That was -- and I wanted to get familiar with where the station was, what kind of patronage it had.

Schrag: This is one of the things I want to get into. As you were watching people, you were a professional observer of Metro riders.

Pfanstiehl: You could say that.

Schrag: What did you see? Did anything surprise you?

Pfanstiehl: I don’t know that anything surprised me. I was no stranger to subways and rapid transit, having been in New York and brought up in Chicago. But I was pleased that there were mothers with children. I would sometimes talk to the kids. We would get into conversation and I would explain what was going on outside the

window. But no surprises really. But it was very gratifying to see so many people using it.

Schrag: Comparing it to New York, did you feel that people were shoving much? This is one of the things that's very hard to measure.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, there was no -- New York or Chicago people were more polite, I guess you could say. Of course, at the very first, it wasn't jam crowded in rush hour like it was today. But, no, I didn't get the feeling of super crowds, unless you want to talk about Fourth of July or inaugurations or something like that. Fourth of July was something else again. We had a famous hassle with the bus company on one of the early Fourth of Julys. I would help in the stations -- the Smithsonian and that sort of thing -- standing and hollering at people, "This escalator is —!" But, no, I don't have any memory of feeling crowded at that point.

Schrag: You thought that people were generally playing by the rules. For example, there has always been a no eating policy, which is another --

Pfanstiehl: And no graffiti.

Schrag: No graffiti, no running

Pfanstiehl: We learned from Toronto and Montreal [to] get that graffiti off the same night. Graffiti is like fungus. If it starts growing, boy. Bless their hearts, the maintenance people. Of course, that's only good for the budget, too, because if you get it off the same night, you get off less. You don't have to take off the whole side of the car. The graffiti had to be caught right away.

Schrag: But there was some even that quickly.

Pfanstiehl: There still is today, I imagine, not anywhere near as much. There was a time when people were getting into the yards at night and doing some graffiti.

Schrag: On the cars?

Pfanstiehl: Yes. Never to the extent that New York was ever. [Tape interruption]. -- international tour. Every system in the world said, "Don't have public bathrooms." Every system. So I would have to explain that at the citizens meetings. I would say, "Look, if you're a diabetic or something like that and you

absolutely have to go, go throw yourself on the mercy of the station manager, because there are toilets there." But that was one of the questions that people questioned. We had to explain that we're not a public facility. We're not a public toilet facility.

Schrag: You mentioned that it was heartening to see kids on the system, that it wasn't just office worker machines. Were there any other groups -- men versus women, black versus white -- that you noticed different patterns of riding?

Pfanstiehl: Only that I was overjoyed, as we all do, that there was everybody on the system. Of course, at first, coming in from Rhode Island you had a good number of African-Americans or blacks, as we called them in those days. But it was never, that I recall -- and I don't think I'm just whitewashing it, should you use the expression -- that there was a big question of the blacks or the whites. When you have a system as open as this, you don't have little places where people can hide and jump out. Your stations, particularly aboveground, are open

where everybody can see everybody. You just don't have anywhere near the problems that you do on a stinky old railway. I don't know that we ever took specific actions to check discrimination in that sense. We didn't have to.

Schrag: Because people felt comfortable.

Pfanstiehl: Yes. If you feel comfortable in your surroundings, you're not going to beat on other people anywhere near as much. You're really not going to knock somebody on the head, grab their purse, and run away if you have to run up an escalator. That was one of the reasons that the architects used to get such an open station. The fact that the free-floating mezzanines let you look at the whole platform, everything is visible. That's a tremendous crime deterrent.

Schrag: [Tape distortion].

Pfanstiehl: -- the problem with panhandling was at the surface where it was Metro property or city property. From early on Graham wanted to set up his own police force. He didn't want to have anybody telling his enforcers what to do. That was a very wise thing, although it was not

particularly welcomed by the police. There was big discussions [about] should the metropolitan police patrol here and the Montgomery police here and the Virginia police there, Arlington police, and so on? We kept pointing out, “Look, we are an interstate organization. If we were only in Arlington, you have the Arlington police. But we’ve got to have our own force that can cross jurisdictions, a UN, if you will. The local police have to be tied in closely so that there is cooperation, but you’ve got to have an ‘international’ police force,” which indeed they did.

Schrag: That’s very interesting, because I guess that’s probably -- when you think about regional government as an idea, you’ve got the Council of Governments, which is more a meeting place between governments.

Pfanstiehl: But it’s not a police force.

Schrag: But it doesn’t have a police force. It’s like a language is a dialect with an army and navy. You know that you have a real government when it has

police power, so in that way Metro is a real regional government the way that COG is not.

Pfanstiehl: Very much so. COG is -- I don't want to say a theory. In a sense, they're a virtual government. They don't have enforcement. That may be wrong as far as water purity or something like that.

Schrag: No. Water is separate. It's under WASA [Water and Sewer Authority].

Pfanstiehl: That's right.

Schrag: I don't know if they have a police force.

Pfanstiehl: I know COG doesn't have a police force.

Schrag: No. Does WASA? I doubt it, but stranger things have happened. In Boston the metropolitan water district has its own police force, I think.

Pfanstiehl: Of course, the Park Service does here, the National Park Service.

Schrag: Yes, but they're national. I'm thinking of --

Pfanstiehl: There's the Capitol police force.

Schrag: Yes. The Supreme Court.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, there are a dozen police forces. They all had to be convinced that there should be yet one more police force in town. As I said, at first they didn't really want them, but it came about.

Schrag: You mentioned that you got to know a lot of the operators. How did that happen if you weren't dealing with the labor issue.

Pfanstiehl: Familiarity, because I would talk to them on the train. And in those days, I was free to walk up into the cab and sit down with the guys. "How are you, Joe?" They would show me what all the buttons were for and that sort of thing. It was very loose compared to what it is today. I would very often ride up in the cab just for the fun of it. I loved standing in that front window and seeing it zooming along.

Schrag: I've got to talk someone into letting me do that sometime.

Pfanstiehl: Yes. Good luck. [Laughter].

Schrag: The other tour I want is Phil Portlock, your photographer, told me about all his helicopter trips. He said it got pretty boring after a

while, but to go up and take pictures of the alignment.

Pfanstiehl: When I lived down on Dundalk Court here in Takoma Park, we were up one day. We took the door out of the helicopter. I was still strapped in, but I had the camera and I was leaning out. I pointed out our house, so the pilot came down and got almost in the front yard. My wife came running out, “Cody! Get back in there.” Those were fun. My first caper with a helicopter was when I worked for CBS/WTOP. We had a wonderful cowboy -- I’m forgetting all these names -- who had been chosen or we had gotten him chosen of the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival. Pick Temple. He was very big in town. He was the kids’ delight. I got a helicopter and we flew out to Shenandoah Valley where Pick got out of it and did his thing with the parade and all of that, and then we flew back. That was great.

Schrag: The other big thing that happens in the 1970s is that Metro gets very expensive. It goes into 1972 still with the $2.5 billion estimate, I think, and it comes out in 1979 saying $8 billion

or maybe a little more. Did you have any responsibility to try to calm down public perceptions that Metro was a very big hole in the ground for a lot of money?

Pfanstiehl: Only in a sense that my job was to explain Metro to everybody on every subject that there was. Sure, I would explain that there is such a thing as inflation, that when we started out the federal government would not let us put inflation into our estimates, and all the different reasons which, to my mind at least, were perfectly legitimate reasons. That didn't satisfy everybody obviously. But, yes, you had to explain that. "Here we had to put in escalators" or whatever it is. You'd just try to explain it as best you could in simple terms. I would sometimes liken it to grocery prices or something else. "After all, folks, everything else is going up."

Schrag: Another big project -- I know that the Alaska pipeline was a perfect comparison.

Pfanstiehl: That and now the mixing bowl.

Schrag: But the Alaskan pipeline -- I'm just using it because it's going on at the same time. Engineering-wise it was the opposite. It's the middle of nowhere and it's weather and it's cold.

Pfanstiehl: That's right, it was. Environment.

Schrag: Here the environment is fairly benign. The problem is all the lawyers. So different ends of the country, equally challenging.

Pfanstiehl: Yes. We should have had some long beers up in Alaska and talked about it with them.

Schrag: Do you remember anything about the -- I guess in '76 Congress said you have to -- no, the Ford administration says you have to do an alternative analysis. The one thing that really gets me about that is at the time they were thinking, "Well, maybe instead of going to Vienna, we'll go to Tyson's for the terminus." It seems like a much better idea to me, at least in retrospect. Do you remember any --

Pfanstiehl: I don't remember the details of it, but I'm sure that Fairfax County and Arlington County were heavy in that, because, after all, that's how they shaped their growth. I told you that

way back in the beginning when there was a blank sheet of paper that Arlington County told us, "Put the transit on the river side of the county so you pull the concentration over there and take it away from the homes that are in the western part of the county." The same thing with what corridors we use and all that. I'm sure that local input was very heavy on that.

Schrag: I guess my last question is, as a historian, how you think Metro's history should be shaped. I know that, for example, when Stolzenbach did his project in, I guess, starting in '79, you were helping him. Can you tell me something about Stolzenbach's attempt on this, because I'm sort of rustling around in the ruins of that.

Pfanstiehl: The big question in those days, of course, was what shape should the region be in. Concomitant with that, does transit shape the region or the region shape transit? We were very conscious of that. In those days, much more than even now, the big center of employment was plainly downtown. Not only that, but unlike many other cities, there weren't the steel works out

here and the automobile works over here. You had your steel works and automobile works downtown. It was likely that that concentration of employment would continue for years in the downtown sector. So logically the only way you could do it was to build a system which pumped economic blood into the heart and out, rather than a helter-skelter system all around. Had we, it was obvious, said we'll just run a circumferential a lot of lines criss-crossing and whatnot, it would have changed the shape of the original tremendously.

Stolzenbach, as a planner and a very civic-minded person, was extremely aware, as were many other people -- the Bureau of the Budget -- that you had to have a center-city-centered system. Indeed, that's what it, as you well know, turned out to be. We were the first, I'm quite sure -- maybe I told you this before -- to put the socio-economic element into the computers for planning the system, because we divided the region up into five hundred and fifty little zones -- the planners did. Each of those zones was tagged with statistics -- what's the car ownership;

what’s the median income; how long or how far is it from the job center; and so on. All those were turned into the mix, and that helped very much to shape the system. You obviously shaped the system by the geology and the rock and the other highways and all that kind of thing. But the system had to grow from the middle out. I’ve always been proud that, one, it was the cooperation of a number of political entities -- the independent towns, the counties, and two states, and the United States -- that had to be brought together; and second, that there was a people input, a socio-people input, into it when it was being planned. It also -- you couldn’t build it today. You couldn’t have built it ten years before. For some reason this was a concatenation of the coming together of a number of factors. The conference of government, the COG, was just coming in. Stop me if I’ve told you this. But the United Fund -- did I talk about that?

Schrag: Yes.

Pfanstiehl: Okay. People were realizing -- not just here. The United Fund started in Detroit. People were realizing that the suburbs and the city had to get together or they would die separately. That condition of social and political thinking in cities hadn't been around for very long, or if it had, it wasn't very powerful. So that was part of the setting, the fertilizer in the field, where we could put it together. So this was the right time. We were very lucky in that.

Then the zeal that we all felt -- and we were not the first public works project to feel this kind of zeal. I'm sure when they built the Taj Mahal it was, well, a little different. One guy said, "Let's build it." But the zeal that we all felt, because this was the Kennedy administration. I left the Evening Star, private enterprise, to come into the Kennedy administration as a number of my friends did, particularly in the Advertising Club, because there was a thrill of working for a dynamic somebody who was going to help people, help society. That zeal took us,

particularly the original group, gave us a real zippy start.

Schrag: Let me just ask you one question on that last point, which is I've noticed to a large extent this has been work that -- the creation of Metro, not these days -- but it was a generational project that overwhelmingly the people I talked to -- I've sort of tracked down people who I figure out were influential. They were born between roughly 1910 and 1925. They were junior officers in the war. They were the Kennedy generation essentially. Did you ever have a sense of that?

Pfanstiehl: Sure. Very much so, very much so. Yes, sir. We were building a better America. With a guy like Kennedy to look up to, look over to, it was just great. Here was this project. Also, I come back to that famous phrase that McCarter said, "We're not building on our grandfather's bones." We could start with a fresh sheet of paper, and indeed we did. It means that we had the "vision thing." [Laughter]. I hate to quote the man. You're right. We were all of the same

idealistic -- I would have to say idealistic and practical generation. By God, it worked.

Schrag: Do you think the war as a shared experience contributed to that?

Pfanstiehl: Yes. Now we're talking a lot broader than just Metro. Sure. Anytime a nation goes through a war, you have a brotherhood that's created, not only within the people in the armed forces but the factory workers. Absolutely. Absolutely. Some of us had -- we had been back from the war for some time, but there was still a feeling of unity in our generation. After all, we were the guys who had been through the war, big war. It's interesting that you bring that up because I hadn't thought of that, but it's very, very true.

Schrag: It wasn't something that struck me at first, either, and then I started doing these interviews, and one after another—

Pfanstiehl: I think you'll find that quite basic.

Schrag: You were in the army air forces.

Pfanstiehl: Yes.

Schrag: So was, I guess, the other air force guy I've talked to is William Lam, who did the lighting. [He] was a bomber pilot. Several navy, several army. The only marine I think I've talked to is William Boleyn.

Pfanstiehl: Bill Boleyn was a marine?

Schrag: Yes.

Pfanstiehl: I didn't know that. [Laughter]. He was a good guy. The feeling that we had all been through this cataclysmic kind of thing was a very uniting feeling. God knows Vietnam was the opposite. I suppose after World War I perhaps it was the same feeling. I don't know.

Schrag: I don't know. I've got a friend who's doing his dissertation on that. Was there a shift -- I guess one thing that's very dramatic for me is the changeover with an interruption from Graham to Lutz, a generational shift and also this professional shift from the great engineer to the bean counter.

Pfanstiehl: Very much, to the bean counter. Yes, sir. We said it. [Laughter].

Schrag: You did? And it's like, what is Metro's great challenge? We know how to dig holes now. The question is how to pay for them. We need a new guy in here.

Pfanstiehl: We needed a bean counter.

Schrag: So there was -- when you realized that you were going to get a bean counter --

Pfanstiehl: Metro has been very lucky in having the right person at the right time. I guess more than luck. The board, people like Carlton Sickles and those who were way up there in the policy area, picked the right people. The woman, the black woman -- what's her name?

Schrag: Turner?

Pfanstiehl: Carmen Turner was another genius.

Schrag: How so?

Pfanstiehl: It got us -- I don't have statistics -- but it got us tremendous respect in the African-American community among women. And she gave a feeling -- I mean, she was our mother. We could really relate to her as a wonderful person. We could know that it's good to relate to this black

woman who is so good. She just seemed to fit in the tradition. She knew her job, God knows. Of course -- was I out by the time she came?

Schrag: That's what I was going to ask. You retired in '82?

Pfanstiehl: '82.

Schrag: So it was Lutz then Page. Unless Page --

Pfanstiehl: Page was a short-termer.

Schrag: Maybe you overlapped with a Turner a little bit.

Pfanstiehl: I think I overlapped with Carmen a little bit.

Schrag: Lutz and Page switched jobs in '79, but if Page was only there for a couple of years maybe you were still around when Turner came in. I'm not sure.

Pfanstiehl: I think I was around maybe at the beginning of it. As a matter of fact --

Schrag: She was an assistant general manager before that, so you knew her.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes. We all knew her and dearly loved her. She was great.

Schrag: Do you have any stories about her?

Pfanstiehl: I wasn't that much around.

Schrag: It's sort of the same problem I have with Graham, in some ways, is you get people saying long things about him and then it's just hard to -- it's a lot easier somehow when people are very critical of someone for them to remember terrible stories about them.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes. Well, there are other stories about Graham driving every Sunday through the tunnels with his car.

Schrag: On a dirt-bike.

Pfanstiehl: No, with his car.

Schrag: In his car as well?

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes.

Schrag: Okay. Because Howard Lyon told me that he did it on a dirt-bike as well. Maybe they weren't wide enough—

Pfanstiehl: He did. But he took his car in one time from Rosslyn. Or I guess he probably went in maybe even back down at Pentagon City. [He] took his car in, drove under the river, got under

downtown and couldn't turn it around and had to back out all the way. [Laughter]. But those Sunday morning trips of his were famous.

Schrag: What was he doing?

Pfanstiehl: He was, above all, a builder. He used to say that about himself. "I build things." So he would look at the thickness of the beams and whether the I-bolt was in right. He knew every jot and tittle of that system. After all, if during the week you're in the damn office, and you can get out and actually touch and feel and pound on what you're creating, that's the greatest satisfaction in the world. Also it helped him. When he would come in the next day, he could say to the contractor on this or whatever it was, "Wait a minute. Your spacing is not quite right." They would really know that he knew what was happening.

Of course, that was one of his great techniques as a manager. He would learn -- we all had the feeling that he knew everything we did every day, that he was sitting on our shoulder all the time, because he would learn one or two things about

you or what you had done. When you had a conversation with him, [he would say], “That was pretty neat what you did with so and so.” Gee, if he knows about that. But it gave us that feeling that -- since we trusted him and admired him, it gave us that feeling that he was right in there with us.

Schrag: That’s very helpful actually.

Pfanstiehl: Oh, yes. It’s a marvelous management tool. That and his knowing the names of people and the fatherly attitude.

Schrag: It’s kind of like going into a seminar where you haven’t done all the reading but you get in the little piece that you’ve done.

Pfanstiehl: That’s exactly. He must know a lot more. It’s exactly that.

Schrag: He’s just being polite and letting other people talk now.

Pfanstiehl: That’s right. I’ve used that technique. [Laughter].

Schrag: So he was quite detail-oriented.

Pfanstiehl: Very detail-oriented, yes. Constructing things was his life. Even though he was in the personnel side of the engineering, he was still a builder.

Schrag: Whereas Stolzenbach didn't care about that.

Pfanstiehl: No.

Schrag: One of the things is I've been immersed in the interviews he did in the late 70s and early 80s when he was trying to write his book. He gets to these people, and he talks half the time, being Stolzenbach. And all he talks about is subways versus highways. For him the whole story ended in 1971 with the release of the money and doesn't know very much or care very much about the construction. Obviously he had left the agency, but it's still interesting that even in retrospect he wasn't all that engaged in --

Pfanstiehl: No. His usefulness to the region, to the huge project, was in -- he was the rocket, as I've said before, with the spitz and boom and fires, the rocket that got people's attention. As that he was just great. If I had realized that at the time I think I would have tried to

get him in more controversy. [Laughter]. But it did take that to get the attention of the lawmakers and the bean counters and everybody else. But you're right. He was an academic. When the academy turned into a workshop, there was his time, rest his soul. I always used to be fairly careful about putting him on talk shows, however, because we didn't want to exacerbate the anti-highway thing. He would sort of get off on a preachy kick.

Schrag: Preachy. That's a good word for a lot of what [he did].

Pfanstiehl: But I'll give him all the credit in the world for sticking up for what he believed in and getting something done, getting something done. Of course, Montgomery County, as you undoubtedly know, in those days and still, is the planning theoretical capital of the area.

Schrag: Though Arlington -- as you said, with their very careful siting of the stations, they are literally a textbook example as well. You open up the book on development around train stations, you get Montgomery County and Arlington,

photographs of Ballston and Silver Spring, among others -- Bethesda and not so much Courthouse. Maybe a little around Courthouse. Ballston is the big sort of perfect --

Pfanstiehl: Pentagon City.

Schrag: Pentagon City a little less because you can't walk as easily. That is, there is a lot of stuff around it but there are fewer sidewalks. I guess to some extent Clarendon. And then Rosslyn -- there's a lot of stuff around the station. Unfortunately it's all offices so it dies at five o'clock. Even so it's very impressive that anything like this should exist in northern Virginia.

Pfanstiehl: I think Arlington was really quite a triumph.

Schrag: And Fairfax quite the disaster. The Orange Line in Fairfax.

Pfanstiehl: Prince George's.

Schrag: That's another chapter. I'm not quite there yet.

Pfanstiehl: Prince George's had the problem of wanting those four short lines reaching out short of the

beltway. After a while, when people woke up beyond the end of those lines, “Wait a minute now. Bring mine out to me.” I’ve got to get down there and ride that Green Line one of these days. The next opening is --

Schrag: January they’ll finish the system. They should have you on the platform.

Pfanstiehl: Marilyn Dicus is going to retire after that.

Schrag: What’s her position?

Pfanstiehl: She was my right arm in the office for a long time. She’s now in charge of publications for the agency. But she was one of our original great group of community service people. You really ought to talk to her sometime.

Schrag: Yes. Do you know roughly when she started? 1970s?

Pfanstiehl: I went in in ’61. Probably the late 60s. She knows more about the inner workings than most of the people there because she’s been there for so long. And being in the publications and community service area, she had contact with a great many. She’s really a gold mine.

Schrag: How do you spell the last name?

Pfanstiehl: D-I-C-U-S. When you're through here I can ring up her name on my computer or her address and telephone number. She is moving to Hawaii. Her husband is a newsman at WTOP. He's got himself a good deal. He'll go to Hawaii and do for WTOP what he's doing here. He was a UP newsman. She's an excellent person.

Schrag: I'm not sure I can get funding to go to Hawaii, so I need to get her before she leaves.

Pfanstiehl: You can get another grant. [Laughter].

Schrag: That's interesting, because there is so little institutional memory at WMATA that it's very hard to find people.

Pfanstiehl: And we're dying off, kid. [Laughter].

Schrag: People retiring.

Pfanstiehl: That's right. Larry will have some. You did talk to Howard Lyon?

Schrag: Yes.

Pfanstiehl: Good old plodding, phlegmatic Howard Lyon. [Laughter]. I don't know -- there are some others. Some of the secretaries have been there

for an awful long time. It was a grand, grand adventure, I will tell you.

Schrag: Okay. On that note, I will stop the tape.

[End of Session].

[End of Interview].

INDEX

Alaska 102
Americans with Disabilities Act 78, 81

Baker, Helen Cody 79
Barnett, Cleatus 19, 27, 41
Bell, Art 80
Boleyn, William 106
Broyhill, Joel 13

California
  San Diego 75
Canada
  Montreal 16, 96
  Toronto 16, 28, 51, 63, 96
Carter, Jimmy 41
CBS 6, 7, 101
Chalke, O. Roy 84, 85
Chicago Daily News 79
Cody, Buffalo Bill 73
Commission of Fine Arts 42, 51, 52, 53
Cooper, Kent 46, 87
Council of Governments 99, 104

Dean, Tom 5, 20, 24
DeLeuw 50
Dicus, Marilyn 112
District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority 99
Dodge, _____ 57

Eels, Eleanor 79
Eisenhower, Dwight D. 5, 93
Engineering Society 8

Federal Highway Administration 60
Feldman, Ray 93
Florida 7, 73
Forsythe, Stanley 25

Gold, Bill 8
Graham, Jackson 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 61, 83, 84, 85, 98, 106, 108, 110
Graham, Katherine 69
Gutheim, Frederick 4, 5, 6, 46, 47

Hawaii 113

Heflin, Harry 81
Herman, Bill 43, 57
Horsky, Charles 87

Illinois
  Chicago 3, 14, 25, 28, 33, 35, 36, 67, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 96
  Highland Park 81

Japan 63
Johnson, Ladybird 71, 72
Johnson, Lyndon B. 5, 28, 86

Kaufman, Sam 7
Keith, Robert 5
Kennedy, John F. 6, 27, 93, 104, 105
Kentucky 17

L'Enfant, Pierre 25, 53, 54
Lake Forest College 74
Lamb, William 106
League of Women Voters 14, 15
Leonard, Herb 36
Long, Howard 108
Lutz, Theodor 106, 107
Lyon, Howard 24, 50, 113

Maryland 2, 18, 19
  Bethesda 67
  Montgomery County 3, 4, 21, 22, 23, 35, 41, 62, 66, 67, 94, 98, 111
  Prince George's County 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 66, 112
  Rockville 3, 5
  Silver Spring 31, 73, 95, 111
  Takoma Park 14, 39, 100
Massachusetts
  Boston 99
McCarter, Walter 25, 28, 31, 33, 35, 36, 42, 43, 44, 57, 58, 105
Michigan
  Detroit 3, 104
Missouri
  St. Louis 3

Natcher, William H. 18, 24, 58, 59
National Capital Planning Commission 42, 49, 51, 53, 66

National Capital Transportation Agency (NCTA) 1, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21, 23, 31, 34, 35, 40, 46, 53, 64, 85, 87, 92
National Park Service 71, 72, 99
New York
New York City 15, 63, 78, 86, 96, 97
Nixon, Richard M. 29

Ohio 17

Page, Richard 107
Perlman, Sherman 18, 24
Pfanstiehl, Alfred 74
Portlock, Phil 100

Quenstedt, Warren 13, 14, 18, 24, 31, 35, 41, 57, 60

Rannells, John 46, 50
Reynolds, John 12, 24, 43
Roosevelt, Franklin D. 42
Rowe, Libby 49

Seeger, Ed 18, 24, 31, 35
Sickles, Carlton 19, 27, 107
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill 43
South Carolina 2, 17
Stevens, Thomas Wood 75
Stolzenbach, Darwin 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 40, 41, 42, 46, 67, 77, 94, 102, 103, 110

Tanswell, Bert 75
Temple, Pick 101
Tobriner, Walter 52
Tocqueville, Alexander de 64
Turner, Carmen 107, 108

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 37, 54, 55, 57, 83
United Fund 2, 5, 7, 15, 104
University of Chicago 69, 75, 76

Virginia 2, 13, 18, 23, 41, 67, 98, 111
Alexandria 3
Arlington County 23, 98, 102, 111
Dumfries 13
Fairfax County 23, 102, 112
Falls Church 16, 17
Vienna 102

Warner Brothers 6, 9, 91
Washington Daily News 9
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) 1, 19, 20, 25, 57, 59, 68, 84, 85, 87, 93, 113
Washington Post 8, 9, 13, 29, 69, 93, 94
Washington Star 4, 7, 8, 9, 104
Washington Times-Herald 9
Washington, DC 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 21, 22, 32, 34, 43, 52, 54, 63, 65, 66, 80, 83, 86
Weese, Harry 25, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54, 77
WTOP Radio 2, 6, 7, 101, 113
Wyoming
Cody 73